The teeth that ache

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/11054058.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Categories:	M/M, Multi, F/M, Other
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Bedelia Du Maurier, Jack Crawford, Abigail Hobbs, Alana Bloom, Robert Lecter, Tobias Budge, Freddie Lounds, Matthew Brown (Hannibal), Margot Verger, Mason Verger, Randall Tier
Additional Tags:	Canon Compliant, Vampires, Series-AU, Hannibal is a vampire, Hannibal is a Cannibal, not crack, Canon-Typical Violence, Original Character(s), Original Character Death(s), Other Additional Tags to Be Added, Gaslighting, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional/Psychological Abuse, Love at First Sight, Slow Burn, Blood, Blood Drinking, Feeding, Changing POV, Blood Bond, Murder Vampire Husbands, Soulmates, Masturbation, Dreams and Nightmares, Ravenstag, First Kiss, Blow Jobs, blood wine, Vampiric children, Manipulations
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-06-02 Updated: 2020-11-13 Words: 117,592 Chapters: 26/?

The teeth that ache

by Nalyra

Summary

Hannibal is old. Far beyond his looks.
And life is... dull. Even if you play your games with the police.
Because it's no fun if you have no one to share them with.

And then he meets Will Graham.

Old habits die hard though. As does hope.

_____

A rewrite of the show canon, canon compliant with an original-designed Vampire-lore approach.
Slow burn because, you know, show canon :).
Well. Mostly. Eventual Hannigram of course.^^

Tags will be added as needed.

Contains original dialogue from the show.
Characters will stay within their characters.

Planned to be ~45 chapters long.
Updates may vary, but I have a clear goal in my mind and ... well. :)
Also playing with the "Love at first sight" angle that Mads put out there :).
And how/what it would mean re Hannibal's canon behavior in this setting.

Starting a bit slower and closer to the episodes, will probably veer off the onscreen interaction more soon. You know, 'they' do what they want.

Notes

Enjoy :P.

See the end of the work for more notes

Hope rekindled

It is a hollow feeling.

Time, it seems, neither flows, nor races, nor stops. It just is, sluggish and tugging, the ticking sound that grates on your nerves conversely the only thing that saves you from going insane. Their petty worries grate on your nerves, the exterior you present entirely unfazed, while your soul screams and claws at the reins.

Your gums ache.

Time to feed.

Soon.

*****

Will enters the office sullenly, head ducked slightly, his steps hurried. He stops at the entrance to Jack's office, instantly annoyed at someone else there, someone else he has to… socialize with. He exhales in a rush, hurrying over to the chair, seating himself without looking over.

„Will. How nice of you to come by."

Will pulls a face, annoyance racketing up a notch. He rummages around in his bag, trying to find his pen, ignoring the ones already on the desk. He feels the presence like a heavy weight, irritating.

„Tell me then, how many confessions?"

Will looks up without really wanting to, the accented voice somehow entirely unsuspected, shaking him a bit out of the distracted aversion.

„Twelve dozen last time I checked. None of them knew details. Until this morning. Then everyone knew details. Some genius in Duluth PD took a picture of Elise Nichols' body with their phone and shared it with a few close friends. Freddy Lounds ran it on Tattlecrime.com."

The word leaves his mouth without much interference of his brain, a pure exclamation of feeling.

„Tasteless."

Interest. It brands up to Will and he winces, feeling the emotion projected, keenly, bristles raising. Movement at the edge of his vision as the man in tan and muted colors shifts towards

him. Typical understatement. Will would be intrigued if he weren't so annoyed.

„Do you have trouble with taste?"

Bile at the tip of his tongue, driving home the fact.

„My thoughts are often not tasty."

Amusement, elation. Why elation? Will frowns, trying to keep up with the emotions he feels branding up to him.

„Nor mine. No effective barriers."

An underlying shiver of understanding, which Will wants to rebuke, instantly.

„I make forts."

Earnest regard now, right next to him.

„Associations come quickly."

Oh for heavens sake. Let's not.

„So do forts."

Normally a repeated rebuke is enough. Normally. Another itch begging to be scratched makes itself known, irritating, just out of recognitions's reach.

„Not fond of eye contact, are you?"

Will reaches for the cup, his eyes taking Hannibal in, looking but purposely not establishing eye contact, eyes roaming.

„Eyes are distracting. You see too much. You don't see enough. And it's hard to focus when you're thinking those whites are really white or they must have hepatitis, or is that a burst vein? So I try to avoid eyes whenever possible."

Amusement again, even visible this time. And… helpless somehow, disarmed, voice colored by honesty. Colored by it. Another itch.

„I imagine what you see and learn touches everything else in your mind. Your values and decency are present yet shocked at your associations, appalled at your dreams. No forts in the bone arena of your skull for things you love."

Will stops for a moment, hackles rising. He feels uncomfortably flayed open, unsettled, his question fired at Hannibal and then Jack.

„Whose profile are you working on? Whose profile is he working on?"

Apologetic. Almost perfect.

„I’m sorry, Will. Observing is what we do. I can’t shut mine off any more than you can shut yours off.“

Will gapes at him for a millisecond and then turns to Jack, forcing the adrenaline into spite.

„Please don’t psychoanalyze me. You won’t like me when I’m psychoanalyzed. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have to go give a lecture on psychoanalyzing.“

He grabs his bag, scuttling out of Jack’s office, feeling… desperately unsettled. He tries to calm himself while he grabs himself a sandwich to eat before class, trying not to think at how weirdly and pleasantly surprised Hannibal looked, when he snarked at him. Or how precise the observations were. Just don’t think about it. He drop his bag on his desk with a heavy sigh, forcing his thoughts to the job at hand.

*****

Her lungs are pre-smoked.

You lift her and then carefully press her down, the scalpel glinting in the night. She dies under your hand, as so many did before, the steady ‚drip drip drip‘ of blood into your mouth loud in the cold air. You hold the lungs high up to catch the flow of excess blood, knowing you must restrain yourself, knowing the meat will be enough, you must not tip them off by missing blood.

You will get your fill from your provider.

Your teeth ache.

You turn and walk away, satisfied with the display, your feet not leaving tracks.

*****

She is valued and she knows.

She offers her thigh this time, the bite mark more easily hidden and the vicinity more pleasurable for her. You do not mind.

You snarl, your teeth dropping, a bone deep relief accompanying it. You nuzzle close, eyes catching her’s for a moment, watching the shadow of the illusion of power she thinks she possesses. You smirk and then bite, never missing a drop.

The feeding is a red haze, flashes of eyes and impressions of feelings in the blood. You moan when the vision changes, the shape of blue eyes shifting, stirring something within you.

You try to squash it, desperately, disillusioned.
It lodges deep inside what society believes is a soul, despite your best endeavors.

Hope.

You curse.

Silently.

*****

Cooking is therapeutic. You squeeze the lungs, preparing your meal. A fatalistic relaxation settles again as you eat and you look at the tomato with a small smile.

Let's see if he is worthy then.

You concentrate on drawing him, the connection frail. The vision comes to life and you release it, letting it be what it will.

You sharpen your pencil with the scalpel when the call comes.

How delightful.

*****

Will opens the door in his underwear, having slept rather fitfully, dreams of a black, feathered stag watching him unsettling and way too vivid. He frowns when he sees Hannibal, laden with boxes, still dressed in tan. Will frowns, curt after the short night. Hannibal smiles at him, politely, ignoring the way Will's eyes dart back and forth.

„Good morning, Will. May I come in?"

Will hesitates, noting absently that Hannibal does not make any movement towards him.

„Where's Crawford?"

Another polite smile, pasted on a similar expression. Will listens, unhappy.

„Deposed in court. The adventure will be yours and mine today. May I come in?"

Asking, again. Will curses internally, half at his own tattered remnants of politeness, figuring it would be too rude to say no. He gesticulates and steps back, the non-verbal invitation accepted with a short nod. Will turns and leaves Hannibal to do as he will, dropping down onto the bed to pull on his jeans, the darkness echoing his mood. Hannibal pulls open the blinds and starts to set the table, his eyes on the task. Will watches him for a moment and then steps up, lowering himself into the opposite chair, silently. The mannerisms are practiced and sure, groomed. Vaguely aristocratic. Will tilts his head, scratching his beard. Hannibal's voice pulls him from his thoughts, carefully polite.

„I'm very careful about what I put into my body. Which means I end up preparing most meals myself. A little protein scramble to start the day. Some eggs, some sausage."

Will leans forward, the smell making his mouth water. He spears some of it with his fork, somewhat grumbly, hunger making itself known suddenly. The taste explodes in his mouth, rich and savory. The words come almost despite himself, almost grudgingly.

„It's delicious. Thank you."

Satisfaction showing itself of Hannibal's face for just an instant. Amusement. Probably at another door opened, so easily. The thought tastes sour in Will's mouth, adding to his mood.

„My pleasure."

I bet. Will doesn't say it but he can literally tastes the words on his tongue, his eyes flicking up and down of his unexpected guest. Hannibal hesitates and then looks at him directly, not quite apologizing. Probably running through all the tidbits of information he has on Will already and trying to discern which way to go. Well, good luck there.

„I would apologize for my analytical ambush but I know I will soon be apologizing again and you'll tire of that eventually so I have to consider using apologies sparingly."

Will forces the snort that lodges in the back of his throat down, his tone dry.

„ Just keep it professional."

A narrowing of eyes, the instant rebuke evidence of a quick mind.

„Or we could socialize like adults, god forbid we become friendly."

Sharp wit, interesting, if Will is honest to himself. Time to up the ante.

„I don't find you that interesting."

A small hesitation and the calm acceptance of knowing.

„You will."

Fuck. Will clenches his jaw, his gut telling him Hannibal is right, the emotion battering against his already foul mood. He watches as Hannibal purses his lips, changing the subject.

„Agent Crawford tells me you have a knack for the monsters.“

Oh, does he now. Will narrows his eyes, wondering for a moment what else Jack may have talked about. He sighs, dismissing the thought, the feeling settling uneasily in his gut. He forces himself to get on with business, diving right in.

„I don’t think the Shrike killed that girl in the field.“

A small twitch, almost invisible, and Will feels as if he has passed a test, energy shifting between them.

„The devil is in the details. What didn’t your Copy Cat do to the girl in the field? What gave it away?“

Anger. It rolls through Will at remembering, the petulance of the negative image still so fresh in his min.

„Everything. It’s like he had to show me a negative so I could see the positive. That crime scene was practically gift-wrapped.“

Hannibal watches him with a minute smile on his lips, his voice carrying a faraway note, as if quoting, though from a book or from experience is something Will feels is impossible to tell.

„The mathematics of human behavior. All those ugly variables. Some bad math with this shrike fellow. Are you reconstructing his fantasies? What kind of problems does he have?“

An almost snort again, dry and Will scratches his beard.

„He has a few.“

Hannibal leans forward slightly, eyes sparkling.

„Ever have any problems, Will?“

Will works his jaw, his face taking on a deliberately innocent expression.

„No.“

Sarcasm now, and Will can feel it in his bones, the sliver of derision almost indiscernible, carried on subtends of Hannibal’s voice.

„Of course you don’t. You and I are just alike. Problem free. Nothing about us to feel horrible about. I think Uncle Jack sees you as a fragile little tea-cup, the finest china used for only special guests.“

Will lets out a startled laugh, more a cackle, the mirth never reaching his eyes, trying to see Hannibal.

„How do you see me?“

Utmost sincerity there, stifling in its purity, so rare it is like a punch into Will's gut.

„The mongoose I want under the house when the snakes slither by."

Will locks eyes with Hannibal, the red brown eyes seemingly glowing in the early morning light streaming in through the window. He tries to think of something to say, his mind almost static with the implications and vagueries.

Hannibal smiles at him and points, tone soft.

„Finish your breakfast."

Yes, mom. Will picks up his fork and digs in almost stubbornly, chewing contently on the meal, trying to make sense of their conversation. He swallows, taking a sip of the very good coffee, keeping his tone light.

„Do I meet your expectations?"

Subtle hesitation. Unsurprising really, as Will's question must be weighed against the supposed meaning. Hannibal takes a sip himself, buying time and Will has to stop his smile, watching closely. Hannibal tilts his head, expression open, but sharp somehow, echoing Will's tone.

„The psychiatric circles are very much interwoven as you probably know."

Will hums, lips twitching, amusement coloring his tone.

„You didn't answer my question."

A slight smile, the dark eye suddenly unflinchingly on his, boring into his skull.

„Yes. More than I anticipated."

This time the snort breaks free, accompanied by a sigh. Will taps the plate softly, twice, scratching the last remnants of his breakfast together.

„So your interest is professional."

Very subtle hesitation this time, almost inconceivable if on weren't looking so precisely already. Interesting.

„Of course."

Will cackles again, lightly toasting with his cup of coffee.

„They tell me they never encountered someone like me before… well, no one that made it to adulthood that is. Ain't that… reassuring."

Will almost hisses the last few words, his jaw aching where he has clenched it, watching the sun filter through the thick curtains. A soft click draws his gaze back up, locking with

Hannibal right away. Hannibal sounds faraway somehow, almost citing.

„I can assure you that you are unique. A prize and a burden. Your's to bear."

Will exhales sharply through his nose, something tugging at his soul. He puts the cup down after a moment, deeply unsettled and yet tranquil somehow. Understood. He shakes his head, tries to dislodge the feeling, pushing himself up. He gesticulates vaguely at the table, inclining his head.

„I'll get myself ready. Thank you for… breakfast."

He turns, feeling the weight of that gaze, like lead, impossible to ignore.

*****

He smells so good. O negative if you are not mistaken. Universal donor.

It makes your mouth water and your facade slips as you smile in appreciation.

„What are you smiling at?"

You deflect, noting that he isn't quite looking at you anymore after the conversation.

You miss his gaze.

*****

It's just too good to pass up.

A small phone call and all the bets are off.

And, by the gods you don't believe in, it feels good to play once more.

*****

The screams ring loud through this house, permeated by the coppery smell of fresh blood. You hesitate, delighted when Will looks back for a moment as he enters the house, waving at you. Inviting. It is not a physical restriction but a rule, binding in this game for them all, only allowed to be broken during a hunt. The spice to invigorate the blandness a bit.

You enter, keeping your face carefully neutral. Crying and wails from the kitchen, clear sounds of distress.

Shots.

Fresh blood, so much blood.

Your gums ache, the need pulsing.

You force it down, needing to see, your mouth dropping open a bit without your volition.

He is magnificent.

Frantic, covered in blood, desperate fury and terror coming off of him in waves.

And eyes, so blue amidst the drops of red.

A good look on him.

It cannot hurt to delve into his life a bit more, can it?

You cross over and try to ignore the way it feels as you replace his hands with yours. How slippery they are. How you want to lick them.

You avert your gaze and stay with her.

She has blue eyes as well.

*****

You stay at her side in the hospital. When he finally comes by he falls asleep watching you and you stay until the need drives you away.

You do not let yourself think about why.

You gorge yourself that night.

Young men with dark curls and blue eyes, not missed from where you take them.
Their throats yielding willingly to money at first and easily under your power afterwards.

You makes it a good death, this time, making sure they shudder to completion before you rip their throats out, the need to maul irresistible when their souls darken. Their pleasure is yours and you can almost imagine the color of their eyes to be the daylight sky as they were able to see it.

How fabulous it must be.

*****

You re-paint your dining room that night, sleep not necessary after a full feeding.

You have not heard from Jack Crawford, the hunt successful after all.

Maybe it’s for the best.

Attraction never ends well for your kind.

One way or another.

Your gaze drifts to the phone from time to time though.

Hope has been rekindled despite your better knowing.

Feathers, black as night

Hope is a fickle thing.

If it is not constantly renewed it turns sour.

You call Jack Crawford and inquire about Will Graham's health.

Eventually.

With the best intentions.

Of course.

*****

Ostentatious and overbearing. Will feels stifled as soon as he enters the room, wanting, needing air. He climbs the ladder without asking, perusing the books silently. One time around, then back. Again. Hannibal watches, genially, as Will returns to the ladder, hesitating. Will traces the handle for a moment and then turns again, not ready to enter Hannibal's vicinity, though he cannot really tell why. Whatever it is, it escapes Hannibal's pretentious suits and folded handkerchieves, rolling like fog around this room.

Permeating everything.

Will inhales deeply, watching Hannibal sign and shift something on the desk below.

„What's this?"

Nonchalance, displayed to perfection. Smug bastard.

„Your Psychological Evaluation. You're totally functional and more or less sane. Well done."

Will has the urge to snort again, suppressing it on the grounds that being here was not his idea and if Jack wants him to pass and Will wants to continue with this job he really has to get a hold on his sass. Really. He cannot quite stop the incredulous tone though.

„Did you just rubber stamp me?"

A small incline of the head, eyes twinkling, visible even from this distance. Interesting.

„I did. Jack Crawford may lay his weary head to rest knowing he didn't break you and our conversation can proceed unobstructed by paperwork."

Will looks at him for a long moment, trying to see past the polished surface. The words coming are a bait, dripping off his tongue.

„Jack thinks I need therapy.“

Hannibal takes the bait, wonderfully restrained. His words make too much sense, hit just the right tone.

„What you need is a way out of dark places when Jack sends you there.“

A deflection of responsibility. Will latches onto it, knowing it and unable to resist anyway.

„Last time he sent me into a dark place I brought something back.“

A shift in stance telegraphs the shift in subject.

„A surrogate daughter? You saved Abigail Hobbs' life. You also orphaned her. It comes with certain emotional obligations, regardless of empathy disorders.“

Will recoils internally, the returning responsibility like a punch into his stomach. He tries to deflect, throwing the ball back.

„You were there. You saved her life, too. Do you feel obligated?“

Honesty, covering the ground around Hannibal like a fog, too dense to see through.

„I feel a staggering amount of obligation. I feel responsibility. I've fantasized about scenarios where my actions may have allowed a different fate for Abigail Hobbs.“

Will nods to himself. He is not sure if Hannibal has the necessary clearance, but the thought bothers him, the words spilling free of their own volition.

„Jack thinks Abigail Hobbs might've helped her dad kill those girls.“

Those almost red eyes are very perceptive. Will tries not to lock with them too long, although he has a feeling his own perception might be welcome, invited even. Another thing to muss over later. Hannibal's question comes eventually, carefully.

„How does that make you feel?“

Oh please. Will sneers internally, throwing it right back.

„How does it make -you- feel?“

The answer is instantaneous, once more stifling in its honesty.

„I find it vulgar.“

Bile tastes bitter in his mouth, his brain trying to match his feelings.

„Me, too.“

Hannibal's eyebrow twitches, his face vaguely mask-like, his fingers tapping his desk softly.

„And entirely possible."

Repulsion. Will fuels it into denial, distancing himself immediately, starting to walk again.

„It's not what happened."

Will recognizes the effort to appease in the tone, having a hard time concentrating through he rushing in his ears.

„Jack will ask her when she wakes up or he'll have one of us ask her."

Will pulls a face, irritated now.

„Is this therapy or a support group?"

An almost smile, echoed in his tone and … honesty, again.

„It's whatever you need it to be. And Will, the mirrors in your mind can reflect the best of yourself and not the worst of someone else."

Will leans on the railing, swallowing after a moment. His eyes drift over the room again, taking the art in, the drawings and sketches. It is not a simple therapy room, too much of its owners personality hidden in the crooks and corners. His voice is rough, when he speaks, changing the subject.

„You spend a lot of time here."

Appreciation. It crosses Hannibal's features before they relax into a genial expression once more.

„I do. Apart from cooking this office provides ample opportunity to keep busy."

Will snorts.

„Catering to the blasé needs of Baltimores finest?"

A twitch in the corner of Hannibal's mouth, gentle rebuke.

„Catering to the needs of those that need my help, yes."

Will raises his eyebrows, clicking his tongue. He locks eyes with Hannibal, serious.

„And those that can afford it."

Hannibal has the good grace not to answer this, only inclining his head a bit. Will pulls a face and pushes himself away from the banister, retracing his steps back to the ladder. Hannibal walks with him, hands loose at his sides, watching him from below. Will looks out of the window and then back down at Hannibal, noting how Hannibal's eyes latch back onto his

immediately. He narrows them and is surprised when Hannibal breaks the gaze, his tone apologetic.

„My apologies. I noticed your eyes do not possess limbal rings. It is unusual for young adults to have none.“

Will nods to himself, starting to descend the ladder. He drops down lightly from the last step, turning slightly towards Hannibal, who keeps his eyes on the ladder now, with apparent interest in the way the wood veins run. Will sighs softly and then shrugs.

„Runs in the family. And I’m not that young, so…“

This time the smile runs over Hannibal’s face, echoing a secret amusement. He looks over at Will, inclining his head slightly, stepping up to Will, his eyes boring into Will’s, flicking back and forth, his tone containing something that makes the hair on Will’s neck stand up.

„Younger than myself, though. You are not the first person I encounter without the limbal rings, though you are indeed the first in combination with this distinct chromatic display.“

Will hesitates, not knowing quite how he is supposed to react to this. Hannibal clicks his tongue and then steps back, turning away. His tone is all business again when he speaks after a moment, genial and comforting.

„It is almost time for you to return to Jack Crawford, I believe. Would you like me to make you a coffee before you leave?“

Will shakes his head, remembering to verbalize the answer only after a moment.

„No, thank you.“

Hannibal turns to him and nods, once and Will steps up, taking the recommendation letter of the desk. He nods at Hannibal in return and then leaves, feeling … different.

He is halfway to Quantico when he realizes that it is the feeling of being understood that has him so unsettled.

*****

You bite into your own wrist for a moment, just so that you have something to release the pressure of your aching gums on. Retraction is difficult and your mind yells at you, warning you. You ignore it.

You lick over the wounds to speed up healing, gone again in a few moments.

The curtains sway in a light breeze and you feel impossibly glad that you installed the ultraviolet-filtering ones, the artificial light bulbs keeping the spectrum as you want to see it.

His eyes had been brilliant blue-green when he had stared at you.

*****

He comes to you, irritated, scared, angry.

„Did you tell Jack what you saw?“

It’s the only question in your mind and one that is none too ideal. He does not notice, fortunately.

You push him on the thrill of killing, feeling his panic at his enjoyment on your tongue, keeping your face carefully clear.

You step up to him, wanting to be near, stop as he retreats, away from you, unsettled, yes, but sure of himself.

Well. What’s to be done about that.

You follow him, notice how he crosses his arms in defense, before leaning a bit towards you, unable to help it.

His laugh is dry, self deprecation coloring it.

Your own is instinctual. You have to look away, collect yourself.

It is the first honest chuckle in longer than you care to remember.

*****

Red flaming hair and blue eyes as well.

You wonder how exactly you will be able to use her for your games.

*****

The red sauce makes the pork look as if freshly cut and your mouth water more than the smell that accompanies it.

Digestion is bland and unexciting as well as largely unnecessary, though your taste buds seem to have only become better with age.

Well, there is a always something.

You toast with Jack, the first tendrils of … friendship building.

There is a shiver in your stomach, hinting of things to come.

Addictive.

*****

„It takes one to know one.“

The Tattle Crime headline settles deep in Will’s gut though he tries to will it away. The hunt for Stemmet is over, at least for tonight, the victim still alive.
Well, at least something.

Will drives home, feeling vaguely empty, the feeling lifting only when he sees his pack, a smile breaking free. He takes his time tonight, cuddling and playing with each before he makes their food from scratch, the dogs running around his legs, playfully, but without interfering. He grins, shooting them a wistfully amused look, stirring the contents of the bowl with a big spoon.

He takes care of his notes and paperwork while and after they eat, sitting at the lone table next to the stairs, the whiskey tumbler in hand. He hesitates before he takes a sip though, something pulling at him. He puts it back down after a moment and finishes his work before he whistles, taking the pack out. They mill about the property, no other soul for miles and Will inhales deeply, feeling calmness descending.

He raises his eyes to the moon, the light wind cold, sending light shivers down his skin. He types the short text before he quite lets himself think about it, the pack happy in front of his own bed again after a few minutes. He pets each of them and then drives downtown again, the trip almost on auto-pilot.

The hospital is quiet at this time of night, most of the patients asleep. He settles on the couch, as he has done so often now, staring at her, trying to reconcile his feelings.

Reality fizzles.

Will feels fuzzy, warm, the room dark, the rhythmic beep beep beep hypnotic. The sounds fade to the click of hooves after a moment, the motion to turn his head feeling as if underwater, sluggish. There. There it is again. Will takes it in, a huge black stag with… a ravens feathers. Feathers, dark as the night, glinting blue. Brushing by him, or so it feels, the passing by like a tickling of his mind, trying to remind him of… something. Offering

somehow. Will cannot resist. He pushes himself up, wanting to follow, wanting to… see. He watches it turn the corner, vanishing out of sight again, a part of himself yearning to follow, another resisting. He stays frozen to the spot, there in the corridor, watching, watching as the stag takes the light with it.
Darkness descends and it's not comforting but stifling, closing in. Will falls.

Reality jars back into focus, harshly and yet slowly, the blanket new over him too warm, stifling. The lights behind her give her a soft glow and he yearns for light suddenly, deciding to address the elephant in the room.

It doesn't quite work out as intended.
Will tries to listen but his attention is divided, the strange, now recurring dream taking some of it, demanding it. If it was a dream. Will presses his hands into his face, talking about Garret Jacob Hobbs and success, his mind echoing the click of hooves, Alana's voice changing the accent for a split second.

*****

Your hand hovers over the sketch, feeling the dream's echo, the tip of the pencil quaking.

You drop it, striding over to the hidden cabinet in long strides, taking one of the Bordeaux bottles out, nothing except the smell signaling their different content.

0 negative, this time, definitely.

Your hand wants to tremble and you refuse it, closing your eyes on the first sip.
It's a pale shadow to the real thing, nourishment only, but you have a feeling as if the next time you will encounter someone -else's- blood such as this will be as well.

Time to make some calls.

*****

He comes to you, shaken, already unable to resist the pull. It is a dangerous thing to let it happen so early on but apparently there is not much choice either. You resign yourself to it.

Fatalism is always a prudent direction for your kind.

You have convinced Jack to cover any and all therapeutic expenses by calling on someone in the human-resources department to wave through the payments for it. He had been surprised but relieved and you had smiled, genially. Not that the money is strictly necessary of course, but… it is always good to keep the facade.

You press him on the incident, wanting to know, needing to know. He does not look at you, angry and … desperate.

Your mouth salivates.

You call it beautiful and it forces him to look at you. Almost desperate hope, refusing to break free. Hope of understanding.

You understand this so well.

„You're supposed to be my paddle.“

Ahhh, the relief of hearing it, the tone tugging at your insides. You press on, posing the question, reverberating in the air between them, the answer when it comes incredulous, flabbergasted at himself, surprised that he actually voices it.

„I liked killing Hobbs.“

Your heart beats once, hard, the effect pushing a smile on your face, hidden again immediately.

How beautiful.

You lean forward, hands clasped on your knees, almost in his space.

„Killing must feel good to God, too. He does it all the time, and are we not created in his image?“

An almost laugh, relief at being accepted.

„Depends who you ask.“

No rebuke. Hope tastes funny in your mouth. You press on, driving the point home.

„God's terrific. He dropped a church roof on thirty-four of his worshippers last Wednesday night in Texas, while they sang a hymn.“

He is incredulous now, his voice shaking.

„Did God feel good about that?“

You lock your gaze with his, boring into the blue.

„He felt powerful.“

He tries to respond to that and fails and you know why, the memory of that moment rushing through him right now, breaking your gaze after a moment.

Promising and tempting indeed.

And lots to do before he will come to you willingly.

You wonder, for a moment.

And then his eyes return to yours.

And you know.

Immersion

You are vaguely distracted.

How fortunate that you decided to save her life.
They are calling on you now.

Access comes so much easier this way.

*****

Watching him lecture feels… intimate. His face portrays fading tendrils of anger at your meddling. He sees right through your ploys.

How refreshing.

You feel pride.

*****

Abigail's eyes are huge, her lips quivering. Her voice is surprisingly strong, stating a fact, almost devoid of emotion.

„I remember you. You killed my dad."

Will freezes for a long moment, holding his breath. He is acutely aware that Hannibal tilts his head towards him for a moment, as if listening and it makes his heart beat harder, thundering in his ear. He wonders for a moment if Hannibal could hear it, but dismisses the thought as stupid. Hannibal steps up to the bed even more, gently interjecting.

„ You've been in a bed for 3 weeks, Abigail. Why don't we have a walk?"

Abigail hesitates and then nods, pushing the blanket back with a shove. She has to grip the mattress when she pushes herself up, movements slightly uncoordinated. Will watches Hannibal help Abigail dress in a professional but kind way, movements sure, supplementing instinctually. He seems to be able to anticipate her movements and Will watches as he folds the bed back cleanly, while Will offers his elbow to Abigail after a moment.

Her grip is surprisingly firm, not much of a noticeable hesitation of touching him and Will swallows, feeling weirdly touched by the gesture of instinctual trust. If this is what this is. He leads her down, Hannibal suggesting the greenhouse on the way and Will nods, following the suggestion. Hannibal's presence is calming, dense somehow in his back, helping when they step in. The greenhouse is open, the air warm enough but clear, refreshing. Will takes a deep breath, deciding to take the plunge.

„I'm sorry we couldn't save your mother. We did everything we could, but she was already gone."

Flat and wounded, her tone carries a fragile stubbornness. Will leads her over to the bench, notes how Hannibal makes an aborted move to help somehow.

„I know. I saw him kill her."

Her eyes seek Will's and Will has to fight to offer his gaze, guilt at her father's death and guilt at feeling how he feels about her father's death mixing together, toxically. He lets her speak, glad to be sitting down again.

„He was loving right up until the second he wasn't. He kept telling me he was sorry and to just hold still. He was going to make it all go away."

Will swallows, trying to make his tone as clear as possible.

„There was plenty wrong with your father, Abigail, but there's nothing wrong with you. You said he was loving. I believe it. That's what you brought out in him."

She is so perceptive. It rings a bell that Will tries to ignore.

„It's not all I brought out in him. I'm going to be messed up, aren't I? I'm worried about nightmares."

Hannibal interjects, quietly, sure. It calms some of Will's nerves as well.

„We'll help you with the nightmares."

Will swallows again, opting for the truth, the words coming by themselves.

„There's no such thing as getting used to what you experienced. It bothers me a lot. I can only imagine how it bothers you when I see it over and over in my mind.
I worry about nightmares, too."

Abigail turns to Will, her eyes huge and tormented, and yet clear somehow, fixed on his.

„Killing somebody, even if you have to do it, it feels that bad?"

Feels that bad. I don't want it to feel this good. Will's lip quivers for a moment and he has to avert his eyes, tasting bile. His jaw twitches and he feels as if he should scream, suddenly intimately ware of the fact that Hannibal is watching him. Watching his reaction. Watching what he chooses to say. Watches how he chooses to say ist. Just watches. Intently. It's like an itch he cannot scratch and Will's voice is a bit breathless, uttering the truth and yet lying, hiding in double meanings.

„Ugliest thing in the world."

The words taste funny. Hannibal's gaze scorches for a moment and then he averts his gaze, seemingly unfazed and it's like a lead weight in Will's stomach for a moment. He is glad,

when Abigail doesn't inquire further, opting to request instead.

„I want to go home."

*****

You follow him outside.

He is aware of you. Which is promising.

You try not to be disappointed by the lack of enthusiasm of his answer to her, try to remind yourself that you have all the time in the world.

Well, almost.

It's difficult when you can see the vein in his throat pulse, the movement echoed by a rhythmic pressure in your gums.

He almost snaps at the red haired reporter, derision and sarcasm coloring his tone beautifully.

„Miss Lounds, it's not very smart to piss off a guy who thinks about killing people for a living."

Truer words had never been spoken.

You wonder how the emotion behind it would taste on your tongue.

*****

Jack uses you for his own goals.

Almost too easy.

*****

Rudeness really is universal.

You watch as Marissa Schur follows her mother, leaving Abigail hugging herself. The blood on the stone calls you to it, almost invisible between the leaves. Something tickles in the back

of your brain and you excuse yourself, pretending to need the bathroom.

The information is easily obtained, along with the note that they know as well. You hum to yourself, returning to them.

*****

You wait until you can hear their heart slow down in sleep through the thin walls.
You don't always increase the volume like this, the cacophony of voices and sounds threatening to take over your own mind.

You wonder briefly if it is like this for him.

You wait a moment and then draw back into yourself and sprint out, a shadow across the parking lot and street, too fast for even the cameras to capture more than a blur of. It takes a lot of energy and you know you will have to feed again, soon.

She is fast asleep, music loud in her ear pods. You press into the carotid, holding her down almost gently. You do not want bruises on her skin.

The cabin is a bit out of the city, but nothing you cannot reach.

The night's sounds comfort you, the moonlight pale.

You wonder how his skin would look bathed in moonlight.

You carry her up, gently undress her. It's not personal. Apart from the selection criterium.
She slowly comes back to consciousness as you move her limbs and you sigh, holding her head so she has to look you in the eye.
You hypnotize her, snipping your fingers.

It wouldn't be good to have her scream away right now.

You hit her lip, just a bit, needing it to bruise pre mortem.

The antlers make a soft, squelching, crunching sound as you push her onto it gently. She rears up, still silent, eyes going wide.

Her eyes are on you as they break.

You spread her arms out, hiding her breasts with her hair.

Rudeness may have sealed her fate, but there is no need to humiliate her further.

You leave her for a few minutes and retrieve the stone with Nick Boyles's blood.

The final detail.

You take her clothes and leave her, turning towards the unsavory parts of town. You dump them in a burning garbage dumpster, watching them burn.

Feeling one of the thugs close by come.

You turn as if in slow motion, slapping the knife away.
You pull the man up and close, his feet kicking uselessly just a few centimeters off the ground. You close your eyes, the smell of dirty, unwashed skin and boring AB-positive falling away, replaced by a sharp aftershave and the ever present smell of dogs. You let your teeth drop, moaning with the pleasure that runs through you. It settles deep within your gut and you bite down, gasping when the blood hits your tongue, gulping it down, immersing yourself.
The man shudders in your arms, euphoria running through him, carried on the opiates in your saliva. He jerks and you bite down harder, feeding on his release, your mind supplying a luscious line of lips, opening on a silent gasp and blue green eyes with blown pupils.

You ache.

You drop the man before his heart stops, stumbling back.

So rare to feel pleasure outside of the blood.

You snarl into the night sky, not caring if you are seen, just for a second, your eyes unseeing on the stars.

The man turns onto his side, demanding your attention and you bend down, snapping the neck matter of factly. You throw him in the dumpster, turning away, knowing none of the other thugs will come close.

And no one will look to closely at this kill anyway. Or believe the ones that saw.

You sprint back, almost rushing into your room.

You ache, still.

You curse, quietly, any doubts you may have had utterly destroyed.

You send the request again, your hand moving.
You come, his name on your lips when he responds, the echo felt.

*****

It shows up from the meadows, the river behind it. It is beautiful, majestic, antlers wide and proud. The presence it exudes presses into Will, making him gasp in his sleep. The stag prances and the dream shifts, turning violent. Will shivers, the dream's illusion having him drag his knife through Abigail's throat. Red blood splashes and the stag drops as if in relief,

the alarm clock ripping Will from his sleep, soaked wet and shivering. Hard. He pushes himself up and out, fumbling for the blinds, pulling his wet t-shirt off on the way. He wills his heartbeat down, telling himself his reactions are borne of adrenaline. The cold shower helps, finally, but his headache is screaming.

Great.

Will tries to ignore the looks, accepting when Hannibal offers to drive. The headache lessens on the drive and Will manages to breathe deeply after a while, bathing in something elusive and smelling vaguely like addiction. He mulls over the feeling for a while, the car quiet, trying to make sense of it.

*****

The expression on his face is breathtaking.

Disgust and excitement, horror and abject interest warring for dominance. He is gentle with her, his eyes seeing it all.

You listen to him defending himself against the poorly hidden accusation in Jack's tone. You keep your opinion aligned to the explanation he provides, honored and rewarded when he turns to you, unconsciously, in a bid for support.

You interject when Jack comes on him too hard, bordering on rude, something possessive flaring in your gut.

Already.

He connects your kills so easily. It is exhilarating.

You have an impulse to rip Jack's throat out when he sends you to collect Abigail but you swallow it down.

Leaving him there is harder than it has any right to be.

******

You enter the house after Alana, smelling it immediately.

Another opportunity for upping the ante.

How delightful.

Her head cracks into the wall with a satisfying thud, instantly unconscious.

It is a good thing you fed last night. The blood is still so fresh.

You ask if you should help her.

******

It is not surprising she wanted to escape. What is surprising is that she calls you out on being the caller.

You quietly salute her for it, feeling strangely appreciative.

„I am nothing like your dad.“

She does not know how true this is.

You let her chew on her new-found knowledge, knowing there is nowhere for her to turn to.

Not even him.

Especially not him.

Although.

You push the scalpel away from the sketch on which it lies, an angular jaw with stubble sketched.

He likes her, does he not?

Your finger hovers over the place where the carotid would be if the sketch was just a bit more detailed.

Patience.

It’s a virtue, after all.

And a necessary skill.

You look over to where your notebook lies.

Two more days until your next scheduled appointment.

You smirk, retrieving your car keys and turning to collect Abigail.
Time to feed the orphan.

Nudges in the right direction

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will hesitates, his fingers hovering over the screen. It's not a big thing, is it, with his soul laid bare already so effectively every time they… spar. Will frowns, wondering at his own choice of words. It truly isn't a normal discussion, these… conversations they lead. Will sighs, putting the phone on the counter again after a moment. He pulls the little notebook from one of the kitchen drawers, thumbing through it. He looks through the numbers slowly, groaning in frustration when all the numbers coming up belong to students, in all likelihood away for the holidays. Damn his neighbors to get sick just now and Alana away for a day on some kind of lecture. Dammit.

Will picks up the phone again, punching in the number, slightly defiant. He rubs his neck while it rings, his shoulders tight.

„Hello?"

A shiver runs down Will's back. It's not unpleasant but his own reaction makes him frown, shaking the effect off with an effort.

„Hello Dr. Lecter, this is Will Graham."

A pause, the tone just an iota lighter, smoother somehow. Will ignores it.

„Hello Will. How can I help you?"

Will licks his lips, his eyes unseeing on the fields outside, the early morning sun illuminating dusty windows.

„I am sorry to having to ask this of you, but my dog sitter is away, Alana is on a lecture and Jack has just called me in a case. It'll be a few hours flight."

Will inhales, closing his eyes for a moment before pressing on, absently petting Winston's head when he comes trotting over.

„I was wondering if you could check on my dogs later this day. I will put some food and instructions in the kitchen. It would be awesome if you could just shoo them out for a little while."

Will chuckles, his mind conjuring the images easily.

„I don't expect you to trot through the fields, no worries."

Something brandishes up to him, something impossible to discern, carrying amusement. Hannibal's voice carries warmth, and humor, as well as an underlying current of … what. Will shakes himself out of it to actually listen to the words.

„Of course Will. If you are so kind as to invite me to your home and take care of your dogs, how could I refuse.“

Will frowns at the words, trying to pin it down but then shrugs, relieved.

„Thank you. I should be home by tonight.“

There is the sound of tires on gravel and Will curses quietly under his breath, turning towards the half finished dog food, still littering his counter. Hannibal’s words come warmly, knowing.

„Well, I’ll let you get back to it now, then, Will. I will take good care of your canine friends.“

Will rolls his eyes, amused despite himself, nodding, belatedly realizing he has to actually say something.

„Thanks. I owe you one. Gotta go.“

He clicks off, yelling to the cab driver to just wait, hastily finishing the food for later. He scribbles the instructions on a sheet of paper and then puts both away and into the refrigerator. He grabs his jacket and phone, hurrying past his dogs. Will sinks into the seat of the taxi, vaguely unsettled and utterly relieved.

******

You select some of your self-prepared sausages to take with you.
‚The way to a man’s heart goes through his stomach.‘
You have a feeling it might extend to his dogs as well.

It takes longer than you expect to drive out, almost 90minutes. A very important piece of data. His house look almost forlorn, way too big for a single man.

You wonder what he does with all that space.

There are yipping sounds and excited shuffling behind the door. You break a sausage to pieces, opening the door carefully. Time to check his authority over them. You hold out your hand in a fist, the dogs quieting down immediately and sitting down. Impressive. You reward their behavior by throwing them the pieces, the room drawing your attention.

His smell is everywhere, making you yearn.

A stuffed room, made to serve as a single room apartment. A simple bed, drawers, a work desk, a piano. Lots of dog beds. And an interesting book shelf.

The ‚Oxford Encyclopedia of English Literature‘ and ‚Letters of Ezra Pound‘ paired with ‚World of Motorcycles‘ and the ‚Friends and Apostles: The Correspondence of Rupert

Brooke and James Strachey‘. Irwin Shaw’s ‚Five Decades‘ and the ‚Stephen Spender‘ biography by Hugh David. Shakespeare.
Among others. Definitely not narrow minded, then.

You smile.

You turn towards the piano, trying the keys. Slightly out of tune, though the sheets look as if they had been there for practice at some point.

Promising.

He is not vain, but then you knew that already. The drawers of simply the same things are somewhat surprising though. You wonder if it is a comfort thing.

Some bottles under the window. Whiskey, mostly. Not too cheap. Not excessively drinking, then.

Fly fishing equipment on the table. He ties his own lures. The light glints of the tip of one of the lures, and you are drawn to it, red yawn still hanging down. You finish tying it, deciding to marking it. You press your finger down, the small prick almost unfelt. The blood wells up, deep red, forming into a single drop before the little wound closes again.

You look at it for a long moment, watching your own reflection in the liquid. You wonder if he pricks his fingers on these in accident.

You lick it off, imagining it was his.

Your gums ache but you refuse to let the teeth drop, saving that for later.

The kitchen is too frilly for your tastes, probably not even modernized when he moved in. The little room connecting it to the living room has a single desk and chair and an armchair, some files on the table. Functional.

You turn and walk up, the room upstairs apparently unused. Except the bathroom, the little white tiled room clean but with obvious signs of use this morning, towels hung to dry. You hesitate and then pull open the little cabinet behind the mirror.

Headache medication. An electric razor and simple toothpaste. The atrocious aftershave with a little bow around the bottle still. A gift then. Important enough to wear. Family, probably.

No condoms.
Your smile is sharp for a moment.

You return downstairs, the other rooms dusty, filled with boxes not opened in years. Silent witnesses of a life left behind.

You hesitate in the kitchen and then open the little freezer in the refrigerator, noting that it is empty except vodka. You wonder if he has another one somewhere.

The dogs are milling into the kitchen now, expecting their food and you prepare it for them, noting how it is made from scratch, with good meat. You watch them eat for a moment, before you go and retrieve your bag. It is a good thing you brought all the equipment with you, his kitchen not up to your standards.

You cook a stew for him, the meat you use simple pork, this time.

The first time he eats meat you provide you wish to witness it.

You hesitate after packing everything away, the stew covered on the stove. You leave a small note on his bed, to make sure he finds it.

You let the dogs out, watching as they mill about, slightly hesitant to leave.

Your next session is tomorrow evening though.

You click your tongue at yourself and usher the dogs back in, inhaling deeply.

You force yourself to leave, your afternoon sessions waiting.

*****

„Tell me about your mother."

Will wants to snort, changing it into a sneer instead, watching how those eyes drop to his mouth for just a split second before returning to his own. Hannibal hides his interest well. Not well enough though. Eye contact is too easy somehow and Will flashes back to the previous evening, to his own feelings at finding something cooked for him at home. Cared for. Will turns the sneer to a smirk, narrowing his eyes slightly, head tilting, aware he is almost teasing and not caring.

„That's some lazy psychiatry, Dr. Lecter. Low hanging fruit."

Hannibal softly rebukes and the fact that he knows to do it softly lodges itself deeper in Will's stomach than he wants, clawing at something in his soul.

„I suspect that fruit is on a high branch, very difficult to reach."

Will turns the pain into anger, forced with humor.

„So's my mother. I never knew her."

Hannibal tilts his head, way too interested.

„An interesting place to start."

Please don't. Will closes his eyes for just a split second, deciding to turn the question back.

„Tell me about your mother. Let's start there. Quid pro quo."

Slight hesitation, though not in denial. Will watches Hannibal change tracks, collecting himself and preparing his answer.

„Both my parents died when I was very young. The proverbial orphan until I was adopted by my Uncle Robertas when I was 16."

Will looks at Hannibal, trying to envision the past, feeling weirdly akin.

„You have orphan in common with Abigail Hobbs."

Hannibal smirks, his eyes flashing for a moment.

„I think we'll discover you and I have a great deal in common with Abigail. She's already demonstrated an aptitude for the psychological. Quid pro quo."

Will sighs, averting his eyes for a moment, gripping the sides of the chair tightly for a moment, the words coming in a rush.

„There's something so foreign about family. Like an ill-fitting suit. Never connected to the concept."

Hannibal tilts his head a bit, understanding. It pulls at Will.

„You created a family for yourself."

Will sighs through his nose, admitting and rebuking in equal measure. He forces himself to smile at the end, the discussion taxing.

„I created a pack of strays. Thanks for feeding them while I was away."

Hannibal nods, his next words flaying Will.

„I was referring to Abigail Hobbs."

It halts Will and he has to look away, the suggestion feeling weird. Hannibal continues, changing tracks again and Will wonders at the deliberateness for a second.

„Tell me about the Turner Family. Were they affluent? Well to do?"

Slight derision that Will cannot keep out colors his tone. He wonders why he doesn't mind with Hannibal. Well, not too much.

„They lived like they had money."

Another switch. Keeping him on his toes. He -is- a good psychiatrist.

„Did your family have money, Will?"

Will smirks, derisively. Nothing to hide here, tone sardonic.

„We were poor. I followed my father from the boat yards in Biloxi and Greenville to lake boats on Erie.“

Hannibal’s eyes are too understanding for his place in society. It tickles Will’s brain.

„Always the new boy at school? Always the stranger?“

The smile feels painful this time, pulled into a grimace.

„Always…“

Hannibal looks down for a moment, before returning to his, hinting at grudges unspoken.

„What grudge was Mrs. Turner’s killer harboring against her?“

The answer tastes sour on Will’s tongue.

„Motherhood.“

Hannibal refines his answer, sure of it.

„Not motherhood, a perversion of it.“

Will pushes his jaw forward a bit, pressing his teeth together. A sick feeling settles in the pit of his stomach. The clock chimes gently, announcing the end of their official hour and Hannibal smiles at him, softly, making no move to get up.

„Did you enjoy the stew?“

Will raises his jaw, his smile slightly more honest than before.

„I did. Thank you. You didn’t have to, though.“

Hannibal narrows his eyes, his head tilting.

„It was my pleasure. I delight in feeding my company.“

Will raises his eyebrows, just a bit amused.

„I am your company?“

Hannibal smirks, clasping his hands.

„You are a part of my life now, one way or the other. I appreciate your company on the way.“

Will swallows, averting his gaze for a moment.

„I should go.“

Hannibal licks his lips.

„As you wish.“

Will pushes himself up, stopping again after a moment when Hannibal doesn’t follow suit. He looks at him, Hannibal watching him, obviously debating something silently. When he speaks he locks his gaze again with Will’s, voice quiet.

„I was delighted to see Shakespeare among the literature you read.“

Will tilts his head, hesitating. He clicks his tongue, his mind catching on, feeling a weird mix of recognition and shame and relief. His voice is rushed and brittle and yet relaxed. It’s such a relief to be seen.

„Did you like what you found in my home?“

Hannibal clicks his tongue, standing up slowly, his head lowered when he steps close. He raises his head when he is very close, his eyes locking with Will’s. His voice is deep, resonating somehow.

„Yes. Very much.“

Good. Will frowns at his own reaction, opting to nod once, not trusting his voice. He turns his back with an effort, the gaze following him out scorching.

******

You turn to her to feed once more.

She deludes herself into thinking you would need to stay attached.

A deep gasp as she falls, shuddering beneath your fangs, delightful and frail. You lick at the wounds until they close, withdrawing. The words come by themselves.

„I believe it is time to resume my therapy.“

******

He is just on time once more, his punctuality delightful. You smile at him, something tugging on the strings of your soul as you see the gift in his bag. You beg him to enter first, watching him throw bag on the chaise-longue in promising familiarity.

„Good evening. Please come in.“

You click your tongue, unable to help it, inquiring immediately.

„Has Christmas come early? Or late?“

He shoots you a dark look and it punches into something in your stomach. Disappointment, though why you cannot say. He throws his jacket onto the chaise as well, covering his eyes. You want to pull his hands away.

You really have to get a grip on those emotions.

„It was for Abigail.“

Interesting.

„Was?“

You bend down, stroking the satin ribbon gently, before pushing it back into the bag.

„Thought better of it. Wasn’t thinking clearly. I was upset when I bought it. Maybe still am.“

He’s walking away from you, as if driven, self derision heavy in his tone.

„What is it?“

„Magnifying glass. Fly tying gear.“

He is slightly defiant, toying with the letter opener on your desk. You wish he would cut himself with it. Just a bit, of course. You imagine how things could turn if this were different times, and different settings, if this was a different reality. His voice snaps you back to this.

„Teaching her how to fish. Her father taught her how to hunt.“

You sit down, realizing that this brings you in direct line of sight of some of his various assets. A smile tugs at your lips, a bit amused at yourself, your gaze flitting back and forth. He turns to you and you make sure you are looking somewhere else.

„That’s why I thought better of it.“

He turns back and puts the letter opener back. You smile at yourself and then drag your gaze up, wanting his gaze.

„Feeling paternal, Will?“

„Aren’t you?“

A bit. And increasingly something else if you are honest with yourself. Time for some more honesty.

„Yes. Our good friend Dr. Bloom has advised against taking too personal an interest in Abigail’s welfare.“

You watch him literally fume for a second, the fury coming off of him in waves. Such emotions, such tight control. It will be a challenge and so much fun to break and release all

that is bottled inside.

„Tell me. Why were you so angry?“

He gesticulates, half turned away, spitting the words out, his slight underbite making his jaw even sharper.

„I’m angry about these boys. I’m angry cause I know when I find them, I can’t help them. I can’t give them back what they gave away.“

Oh, but yes he could. You yearn to say it, knowing he is not ready, though, if you have read the signals right, he -has- recognized some of your interested. Whatever he is making of this information. You keep your voice soft, echoing the yearning you yourself feel.

„Family.“

He throws his hand up in the air and you want to draw him into an embrace, his tone flat.

„Yes.“

You can taste the admission on your tongue, wanting out. ‚We both yearn for it.‘ You stay quiet, his voice tired suddenly.

„We call them the Lost Boys.“

You almost laugh. You had so much fun in the movie theatre back then. Time to get back to the present. You lick your lips, his scent tasting sweet.

„Abigail is lost, too. Perhaps it is our responsibility, yours and mine, to help her find her way.“

He inclines his head, turning slightly towards you and you can see the line of his neck, the vein thrumming. You avert your gaze, unjustified hunger paired with need rearing its head. His voice reaches you, way too astute.

„It would bind us together in responsibility.“

You press your lips together in a show of consideration, the response obvious.

„Would that be so terrible?“

He turns away, derision again heavy in his tone.

„I don’t think it’d be a good idea…“

You push yourself up, stepping up to him in careful steps.
You can see how his heartbeat picks up speed, thrumming in his veins, the one in his throat pulsing. So close.

You refrain, fingers itching.

„Come to dinner tomorrow, Will. Come and try if it truly would be a bad idea.“

He drops his head back, closing his eyes for moment. You feel the need to pray to deities you do not believe in. He swallows and you follow the bop of his Adam’s apple, unable to tear your gaze away.

He pulls himself up and then covers his eyes with his hands again, shaking his head. His words are muffled.

„I’ll think about it.“

You try to contain your disappointment. He smirks apologetically at you and then pushes by, almost touching, retrieving his bag and jacket. You trail after him, fighting with yourself. You voice sounds fake to your own ears.

„Good night, Will.“

He nods at you, gaze lingering just a split second too long, too seeing. You watch him leave, cranking up the volume until you can track his heartbeat almost to the edge of the city, a beacon, begging you to follow.

When you draw into yourself, -he- is there, watching you, prim and silent on the chaise-longue, his fingers stapled. You greet him, slightly ticked off that he managed to enter without alarming you.

„Uncle.“

He clicks his tongue, looking around the room, gray hair perfectly coifed.

„I have been told that you are neglecting your duties to the coven, Hannibal. You have not been seen at any of the mandatory social events in weeks. Rumor has it you are… occupied.“

Robertas levels you with a dry look, his red eyes burning into your own.

„In all the years I have never seen you this … occupied.“

You purse your lips, unsettled that it has been noticed and yet relieved, his presence meaning no enforcers have been sent.

„I believe… he has potential.“

„He does not know. And he is far from receptive.“

You frown, insisting.

„He will come to me.“

Robertas frowns, his eyes boring into yours, his voice halting.

„This is no simple turning for you…“

You turn away abruptly, tone hard.

„No turning is ever simple.“

You hear the rustling as Robertas pushes himself up, his tone much more gentle suddenly, stepping a bit closer to you.

„When did you know?“

You swallow, a million and no moments coming to mind. He insists, probing, something in you hating it. Your teeth ache to snarl at him, finger hovering so close to the scalpel on your desk. It would be futile, him being so much older and stronger.

„When did you know, Hannibal?“

You close your eyes, the moment coming into clear focus. Blue green eyes, defiant, not quite locking eyes with you, sparring with you, instantly. Fire and water, a lamb waiting to become the lion, maybe the only one able to -know- you. The word comes defiantly, tearing at your soul.

„Instantly.“

A rushed exhale, like an almost snort and then Robertas' heavy and cold hand, settling on your left shoulder, squeezing. A pause and then absolution and you close your eyes against the relief.

„I will let the coven know.“

Robertas steps away, hesitating in the doorway. You turn and look at him, needing to know suddenly.

„Is it worth the sacrifice, Uncle?“

Robertas smiles sharply, the teeth he never bothers to fully hide flashing viciously in the half shadow.

„I do not know even one of us who has regretted it. But Hannibal…“

He pauses, very serious suddenly, his gaze boring into yours.

„It cannot be undone. And if he is not ready it will fail. And kill you both. You know that.“

You click your tongue, nodding once.

„I am aware.“

Robertas inhales deeply, regarding you for a very long moment.

„Very well.“

You stare at the spot he vanishes from for a long time before you move forward and close the door, resigning yourself to prepare for tomorrow.

******

He does not come. You try to hide your disappointment, inviting her to dine with you both instead, bearing her judgement readily. You lie in your bed after, the new blue bedspread soft under your fingers.

Maybe some nudges into the right direction are needed.

Opportunities will present themselves.

They always do.

Chapter End Notes

Will's bookshelf listing: Thanks to hannigramfridge on tumblr!!
https://hannigramfridge.tumblr.com/post/144499893102/will-grahams-bookshelf

Subconscious pushes

You try to refrain but in the end you yearn to do it just to see what it will do.

You concentrate, release the push and then - you wait.

******

The short trip back to his house is quiet, Winston panting next to Will on the back seat. Will releases a breath when he sees the lights from afar, beckoning. The police officers turn to him when they stop in front of his house, earnest expression, imploring, with a trace of condescendence.

„Now, Mr. Graham, glad we could pick you up. But please consider seeing your doctor if this persists?“

Will nods, mute, quietly opening the door. He steps out, utterly relieved to be out of the small car with the locked backseat, the small pain of the gravel under his naked feet grounding. He waves lightly at the police officers and then turns to walk up to the house, Winston bouncing ahead, wagging his tail. The other dogs are up and about inside, wanting out.
Will shivers and then pulls the door open, bending down to calm each one of the pack down, grounding himself in their affection. He wonders if the feathers of the stag would feel as soft. Buster pushes his snout into Will’s back and he starts, almost falling over as he stumbles, the impression of a big snout pushing him almost overwhelming for an instant.

Pushing, pushing.

But to where?

Will rubs his face with both hands, shaking his head at himself. No use to go back to bed now. He chances a look at the clock, the display informing him that it is only 4:30 am. He sighs, hesitating, standing in his living room for a long moment, almost forlorn. Something nags at him, now that he is awake, worry about the situation insuppressible. What if it’s a seizure? Will curses quietly under his breath before he trots into the kitchen, setting up a cup of coffee for himself. He turns it on and then goes up to take a shower, the water cleansing the evidence of dirty streets away.

Where was he trying to go? On foot to Baltimore?

Will shakes his head under the spray, his eyes opening, unfocused. The mirror of his small bathroom cabinet is fogged, a set of fingerprints visible where he must have pushed it closed at some point. Will frowns, irritated, unsettled that he cannot remember that action, normally using the little handle.

Maybe talking to someone would be good after all. Not doing the trip to Baltimore on foot though.

Will steps out of the shower, toweling himself off perfunctory before trotting down, the smell of coffee greeting him. He dresses himself in clean but comfortable clothes, needing the comfort somehow, his feet hurting with every step. He pours the coffee into a to-go-cup and then prepares the pack's food, suddenly sure he has to go. He watches them eat for a moment, a small smile tugging at his lips, the domesticy nourishing in its own way.

It is 5 am when he starts his car, the first gradual lighting of the night sky heralding the impending dawn, and Will drives towards it, the imaginary pushing giving way to a vague pull.

******

You open your eyes when his heartbeat enters the city again.

He will be here soon, driven by dreams.

Now, where is that dressing gown that goes so well with this house suit? And you should probably drink some of the emergency rations. It won't do to be hungry, alone with him and in the sun.

******

Will hesitates before ringing the bell, his finger hovering over the button. He had known the address of course, but this is the first time he is here, the surroundings promising a certain… interior as well. Will pulls a face and then pushes, the low gong not even faded when the door is opened almost immediately. Hannibal greets him in the almost dawn, hair only slightly disheveled and yet composed, a small smile on his lips.

„Will. An unsuspected delight. Please, do come in."

He steps back and extends an arm and Will has to push himself over the threshold, the move feeling as if fraught with finality and meaning, something dropping off of him when he finally stays in the big foyer. He looks around, noting the horns and art, expensive materials everywhere. Carefully tasteful. Defiantly exuberant and just … slightly over the top. He exhales, not surprised and yet relieved somehow. Hannibal steps up to him and Will can feel the impression of a hand in his back, there and gone again before Hannibal steps around him, leading the way to the kitchen. It is of course more … sleek than Will's own and Will is relieved somehow at the muted colors, the metal surfaces reflecting the first rays of sun, bathing them both in a low glow. Hannibal's voice pulls him from his thoughts, and Will turns, eyebrows raised.

„Would you like some coffee, Will?“

Will nods, silently, feeling calmer by leagues and yet unsettled, leaning against one counter with his hips. He watches as Hannibal nods once in return, before bending down and retrieving something from a cupboard and Will has to close his eyes and stomp on the feeling, the urge to snort heavy in his stomach. He opens his eyes again after a moment, watching Hannibal set up the glass and brass coffee … machine, answering his unspoken question after a moment.

„It is a royal coffee maker. The quality of coffee it creates far surpasses the more general coffee makers.“

Will smiles for a moment, a bit self-deprecatingly.

„I am afraid the nuances may be lost on me.“

Hannibal finishes preparing, pouring the hot water in carefully.

„I will gladly broaden your palate, then.“

Hannibal turns and retrieves two glass cups, placing sugar and milk next to them. In matching little jars, of course. Will watches him hesitate, before those dark eyes turn to him, even more dark now with the raising sun behind Hannibal.

„What has brought you here, Will?“

Will inhales, deeply, frowning, his right hand tracing the metal counter.

„I… was dreaming. I dreamt I was…“

Will hesitates, unsure whether he should describe the raven-feathered stag, ultimately deciding against it.

„I was pushed towards a goal and kept on walking. When I woke up I realized I was sleepwalking. Had been sleepwalking, for hours. The police found me and brought me home.“

Hannibal is silent, watching the steam billow up from the little machine, the enticing smell of fresh coffee filling the kitchen. His voice is vaguely amused, defusing some of Will’s anxiety.

„Although I may be, is it safe to assume you’re not sleepwalking now?“

Will grimaces, fleeing into deflection.

„I’m sorry it’s so early.“

Hannibal’s voice is imploring, his words hitting way too close to home and Will stomps onto the treacherous feeling of hope as well, pushing it way down.

„Never apologize for coming to me. Office hours are for patients. My kitchen is always open to friends.“

Will takes the cup from Hannibal, the aroma enticing. Hannibal watches him for a moment before he speaks again.

„Onset of sleepwalking in adulthood is less common than in children.“

So he’s thinking along the same lines then. Dammit. Will forces the words out, feeling nauseous.

„Could it be a seizure?

Something like a smile, a press of lips. Will grips his cup harder, dreading the answer.

„I’d argue good old-fashioned post traumatic stress. Jack Crawford has gotten your hands very dirty.“

Will pulls a face, hides it by taking a sip. He cannot keep the self-deprecation from his voice.

„Wasn’t forced back into the field.“

Hannibal’s tone is dry somehow, grating and yet soothing Will’s nerves, words targeting perfectly.

„I wouldn’t say forced. Manipulated would be the word I’d choose.“

The word’s weight settles deep in Will’s stomach, triggering immediate rejection he doesn’t feel.

„I can handle it.“

Hannibal looks at him and Will knows he knows and mentally braces himself, hearing the words as if from far away for a moment.

„Somewhere between denying horrible events and calling them out lies the truth of psychological trauma.“

It’s bitter on his tongue. He forces the feeling of derision down, keeping his tone light.

„So I can’t handle it.“

Hannibal tilts his head, his eyes flashing with something Will cannot name. He keeps his tone genial, almost too kind, but imploring.

„Your experience may’ve overwhelmed ordinary functions that give you a sense of control.“

Ha. Now that is funny. Will cannot keep the tinge of humor from his response.

„If my body is walking around without my permission, you’d say that’s a loss of control?“

Hannibal tilts his head, watching Will for a moment.

„Wouldn't you?"

Will looks away for a moment, but Hannibal continues and Will congratulates him silently for worrying the point, the pieces going together quite easily, indeed.

„Sleepwalkers demonstrate a difficulty handling aggression. Are you experiencing difficulty with aggressive feelings?"

If only you knew. Will swallows, forcing the taste of copper down. He hesitates, needing it out, trying to keep his voice from shaking.

„You said Jack sees me as fine china used for special guests. Beginning to feel more like an old mug."

Hannibal's eyes flash, his words carrying an undertone Will cannot place, shadowed somehow.

„You entered into a Devil's Bargain with Jack Crawford. Takes a toll."

Will shakes his head in an aborted motion, feeling the need to refute, though not able to do it wholeheartedly. Too true, after all.

„Jack's not the devil."

Hannibal's eyes are almost kind on his, watching and seeing way too much. Will dares do raise his eyes to Hannibal's, feeling as if falling for an instant, the feeling there and gone again.

„When it comes to how far he's willing to push you to get what he wants, Jack's certainly no saint."

Ain't that the fucking truth. Will grimaces and looks away, taking another sip, warmth settling in his stomach. He tells himself it is the coffee. Hannibal finishes his cup slowly, before putting it down, watching Will mull over the thought. He pours Will another cup and then turns, pulling roll dough from the refrigerator.

„May I have the pleasure of your company for breakfast?"

Will scrunches his eyes shut for a moment, not in the mood for company somehow and yet unwilling to leave for whatever reason. He pushes the words out, past the reluctance.

„I… don't think I am good company."

Hannibal hums, heating up the oven. He turns back, his gaze traveling over Will's form, way too aware. Just like himself, always too aware. Will grimaces, snapping back to Hannibal's words immediately.

„I disagree. And you should not drive another 1,5h after walking all night on an empty stomach. Doctor's orders. If you will not eat with me, stay until I can make you something to take with you at least."

Hannibal pauses, the rolls carefully divided on the baking sheet. He wipes his hands and then comes around the counter, right up into Will's space and Will has to fight to hold his ground, Hannibal's presence like a forcefield, pushing into him. Hannibal licks his lips and then seems to fold into himself a bit, stepping a half step back, extending his hand towards the little armchair next to the stairs after a moment.

„Please, Will. Sit down, while I finish preparing."

Will looks over at the armchair and it's like a physical pull, calling to him. He puts the cup down and nods, silently, walking over and letting himself sink into the cushions with a sigh. He hesitates and then pushes himself to say it, enforced by the growl of his stomach.

„Thank you. I will gladly eat with you."

He snorts, waving vaguely at the kitchen and the situation in general.

„It's the very least I can do, really…"

Hannibal hums again, stepping up to Will, though not quite as close as before. He bends lightly forward, locking their eyes, the red in Hannibal's eyes catching the light, pupils slightly dilating. Will swallows, recognizing the signs. Hannibal really hides it well. Will exhales, weirdly at peace with this information, though he really could not care less right now. He'll deal with this later. Hannibal hesitates and then his presence seems to increase, the red in his eyes pulsing for a moment, his words a magnetic caress.

„I will need another 20 minutes to prepare. Put your head back, Will."

Will's head lowers before he can think about it too much, his eyes falling shut on the next exhale, reality dropping away in sunlight, accentuated with blood red.

****

You watch him sleep, the rolls keeping warm in the oven. Everything is prepared and you even dragged yourself away to shower and dress but now you sit here, on a chair in your dining room, like a lovesick teenager, watching this frail mortal breathe.

You really have it bad.

You decide he really needs another half hour.

At the very least.

The veins in his throat pulse calmly, blue under white, hypnotic.

****

She is a pawn, frail and soon to be gone. You admire her beauty and spirit, her soul sharp and unbent.

One more piece on the board, and interesting, to top.

****

There is only one place Will can fathom to go for help, the whole case a screeching mess of human despair, the angel makers plight so very desperate. Will scratches his beard as he waits, pacing in Hannibal's waiting room, having come here on a whim. For input. Of course. He almost whirls around when Hannibal finally opens the door, face in a genial expression.

„Will, I am sorry you had to wait. I wasn't expecting you."

Will smiles sardonically, stepping past Hannibal with his head lowered lightly. Avoiding eye contact. Though why he cannot quite say. He steps into the room, smelling the light traces of an interesting perfume, probably from the patient that just left. He sighs and then turns, extending his arms for a moment.

„I need your help. This case… the suspect has a brain tumor. And now he is trying to… make angels to watch over him. I… is this mental illness or physical?"

Hannibal closes the door behind him, hesitating for a moment. He tilts his head lightly, pressing his lips together in thought.

„I will need to check."

He crosses the room and Will watches him go, the controlled gait, indicative of powerful limbs beneath the three-piece suit, carefully hidden under layers of cloth. Will frowns, wondering at his own choice of words, the word tugging at something. He watches as Hannibal climbs up the ladder to the upper level, suit and all and Will wonders if he would take off his shoes normally. Hannibal peruses his book shelves and Will turns away, watching the light gleam on the polished wood of Hannibal's desk. He traces the wood, turning around the desk in slow steps, hand coming up to caress the leather of the chair, polished and smooth, just as its owner. Will frowns again, and again at his own thoughts. He looks up at Hannibal, suddenly glad he is on the second level, thinking somehow easier and yet more difficult when he is near, the mirrored awareness a knife, pointed at both ends. Hannibal's voice pulls him back from his thoughts, flipping through a book.

„There’s no one and only spiritual center of the brain. Any idea of God comes from many areas of the mind working together in unison.“

Will sighs through his nose, accepting the implied negation.

„Maybe I’m wrong. How do you profile someone who has an anomaly in their head changing the way they think?“

Hannibal returns to Will’s theory almost immediately, reaffirming.

„A tumor can definitely affect brain function, even causing vivid hallucinations. However, what appears to be driving your Angel Maker to create heaven on Earth is a simple issue of mortality.“

Will nods to himself, accepting the direction.

„Can’t beat God, become him.“

Hannibal tilts his head, eyes narrowing.

„You said he was afraid.“

Will almost shrugs, the feelings so clear.

„He feels abandoned.“

As soon as he says it, he wants to bite off his tongue, the sentiment of fucking course not lost on Hannibal, who latches onto it immediately.

„Ever feel abandoned, Will?“

The words he wants to speak are stuck in his throat, threatening to suffocate him. Will valiantly tries for equilibrium, not quite succeeding.

„Abandonment requires expectation.“

A pause, too short to truly notice, just an impression of hesitation from above, and Will knows that Hannibal will change the subject before it happens.

„What were your expectations of Jack Crawford and the F.B.I.?“

Will clenches his jaw, his teeth grating for a long moment. He keeps his voice low.

"Jack hasn’t abandoned me.“

Hannibal’s voice carries its own slightly condescending tone when he proceeds, the cadence itching somehow.

„Not in any discernible way. Perhaps in the way Gods abandon their creations.“

Will cannot help himself, he cackles, the comparison striking him as ludicrous somehow. He raises his eyebrows, tone suffused with sardonic glee.

„Well, this should be interesting. Please proceed, Doctor."

Hannibal's eyes seem to flash for a moment, his presence dark and hovering for a split second.

„Jack gave you his word he would protect your head space. Yet he leaves you to your mental devices."

Well fuck. No mincing words here. Will tries to ignore the jab in his guts, the sliver of hurt they provoke, fleeing into attack.

„Are you trying to alienate me from Jack Crawford?"

Another pause, too short to discern and then another change of subject, leaving the bitter taste for Will to swallow.

„I'm trying to help you understand this Angel Maker you see."

Will almost sneers, imploring quietly.

„Help me understand how to catch him."

Hannibal hums, response almost detached, clinical.

„If he were a classic paranoid schizophrenic, you might be able to influence him to become visible."

Will nods to himself, understanding easily.

„Scare him out into the daylight."

A smile plays on Hannibal's lips and Will wonders if it is the wording or the meaning that provoke the emotion.

„Might even get him to hurt himself if he hasn't already."

Will frowns, shaking his head a bit.

„If he were self-destructive, he wouldn't be so careful."

Hannibal leans forward an inch, arms on the rail. His careful words echo somehow.

„Unless he's being careful about his self-destruction. He's making angels to pray over him when he sleeps."

Will is silent, his eyes drawn up when Hannibal continues after a moment.

„Who prays over us when we sleep?"

Will exhales in a rush, rubbing his face with his left hand for a moment. His eyes flit to the mask on the wall, vaguely reminded of a bite mask by it. He smirks, his thoughts providing him with a dog's bite protection, words carried on emotion.

„I got a packs protection when I sleep… not sure if they pray for me though."

He smirks, eyes flashing with humor.

„Except for more food, probably."

Hannibal chuckles, before straightening up and putting the book away again. He traces the binding for a moment and then turns towards the ladder, descending in easy, practiced steps. Will swallows, holding his ground behind the desk, his words coming a bit gravelly.

„Thank you for breakfast this morning. And for letting me sleep. I guess I needed it."

Hannibal steps up to the desk, his hands resting on the polished surface gently, utterly sincere.

„Anytime, Will."

Will smiles softly, before sighing, his gaze falling onto the clock on the wall.

„I need to get back to them."

Will steps around the desk, pushing past Hannibal, the presence there and gone again. He does not dare to turn, suddenly needing to put some space between them.

„Goodnight, Will."

******

Will tosses and turns, his pack watching on with big eyes, watching over him, yes, but… Will sighs, chancing another look at the alarm clock. Already 5am. He sighs, licking his lips. An instant later he opens his eyes again, his eyes hurting from the light. He is freezing, the dogs yipping behind him, trying to climb onto the roof to him. Well fuck.

******

You are vaguely disappointed when the push doesn't bring him to your door again. The connection is frailer again as well and you frown, vaguely unsettled.

The day is dull and yet raw somehow, no reason to call him coming up.

You calm yourself with the knowledge that he will be here tonight.

******

He is on time but unsettled and obviously troubled, slinging back some aspirin with the glass of water he asked of you immediately after coming in. Not sitting down either. His voice is harsh.

„I woke up standing on my roof in my underwear, facing east."

You narrow your eyes, picking up the direction as promising at least.

„You do not have any recollection of how you got there?“

He shakes his head, arms crossed in front of his chest. Hiding himself in too big clothes, still smelling of engine oil. You try to defuse.

„It’s hard to lie still and fear going to sleep when it’s there to think about. You listen to your breathing in the dark and the tiny clicks of your blinking eyes.“

„I dream more now than I used to.“

Ah, now this is promising indeed. It means something is indeed reaching him. You suppress the smile, staying on track with the discussion.

„Your dreams were the one place you could be physically safe relinquishing control. Not anymore.“

Never safe anymore now. Your claws are in. You will only need to find out how deep.

He dips his head back, facing the open room, not daring to look at you.

„I thought about zipping myself into a sleeping bag before I go to sleep, but it sounds too much like a poor man’s straight jacket.“

An apt comparison. You have to suppress a smile again. Time to change tracks.

„Have you determined how this Angel Maker is choosing his victims?“

He turns towards you when he answers, though he keeps his gaze averted, completing the turn away almost immediately again. Perfunctory courtesy. Sassy.

„He doesn’t see people how everyone else sees them. He can tell if you’re naughty or nice. Or he thinks he can.“

Oh, a little jab at you. You could bet real money on this. You itch to trigger him to see what else he would do. You infuse your voice with just enough incredulity to make it feasible.

„God has given this Angel Maker insight into the souls of man?"

His tone is condescending and flat, the pounding in his head destroying the last vestiges of politeness, though he somehow manages to not come across as not-quite-rude. Quite a feat.

„God didn’t give him insight. Gave him a tumor. He’s just a man whose brain is playing tricks on him.“

A great opening, and one you are not willing to let pass. You watch him step up to the black stag figurine, scrutinizing it. The words taste delicious on your tongue.

„You’re not unlike this killer.“

His voice is frail somehow, dreading the answer.

"My brain is playing tricks on me?“

You draw upon your own need, trying to convey.

„You want to feel such sweet and easy peace. The Angel Maker wants that same peace. He hopes to feel his way cautiously inside it and find it is endless all around him.“

He laughs. A true laugh, even if a bit sad and sardonic. It tugs at you.

„He’s going to be disappointed.“

You are vaguely proud, the echoed sincerity of this statement reverberating through you.

„You accept the impossibility of such a feeling. Whereas the Angel Maker is still chasing it.“

And not just the Angel Maker. You briefly recall the futility of this chase, the addictive pull one cannot escape if but one taste of it is obtained.

„If he got close to it, that’s where he would look for it again.“

He shakes his head minutely, the sinews in his throat coming into focus for an instant before disappearing again.

„I’ve been trying to reconstruct his thinking, find his patterns.“

And what if there are none…

„Instead you find yourself in a behavior pattern you can’t break. You realize you have a choice.“

He doesn’t believe you. Well, he will.

„What is it?“

„Angel Maker will be destroyed by what’s happening inside his head. You don’t have to be.“

Just accept it.
You cross over to him, wanting to be closer, doubting your own judgement when his proximity makes your mouth water.

He is still in front of the stag, studying it. You wonder if the dreams somehow manifest as stags. You bend forward lightly, wanting his scent, or would that be even more than you can discern already. Something tickles your nose and it irritates you and you inhale deeply, the feverish sweetness mixing with the salt of his skin on your tongue. Him, addictive beyond compare, changed by something... Interesting. So that is probably the reason why he didn't come to you then. It must have interfered with the push. You almost start when he calls you out, incredulous, deflecting immediately.

„Did you just smell me?"

„Difficult to avoid. I really must introduce you to a finer after shave. That smells like something with a ship on the bottle."

He is vaguely annoyed, but hiding it well, and not bothered much, even smiling a bit. Good.

„I keep getting it for Christmas."

You know. With a little bow.
You wonder if he would wear the after shave you give to him. Maybe a little push into this direction will help.

„Have your headaches gotten any worse lately? More frequent?"

He looks at you for an instant and then pushes past you, obviously fleeing from your direct proximity.

„Yes, actually."

You watch him go, your thoughts churning, fitting the new information in available paths.

„I'd change the after shave."

He snorts, rubbing his temples before sighing deeply, tone dry.

„Finally the pills are working…. The absence of pain really is the best feeling."

You clench your jaw on the words that want out, wanting to offer another drug, something from your wrist for example.

It would be euphoria for you both.

Not yet.

Not yet.

It's not really clever to think about would be's, is it.

You press your lips together, your teeth pulsing. It is a relief for once when he leaves after a few minutes, obviously wanting to chance the drive while his head is relatively pain-free.

You call one of the enforcers of the coven who owes you a favor as soon as he has left. You trust Miguel. Your teeth drop when he bites into your wrist, tearing into his to complete the circle, your mind providing a different setting.

It is not the same.

But it will have to be enough.

It leaves you soiled and messy, your body sated and your mind numb.

It feels hollow.

******

A nightmare of flames and bloody wings, offset by hay and old wood with mold in the corners.

„I will give you the majesty of your Becoming.“

Will shudders awake, drenched in sweat. His hands come up to trace his face, shaking. No flames. He drops back, vaguely relieved and deeply unsettled, the headache behind his eyes pulsing. Maybe he should ask Hannibal for something against the pain. Will scrunches his eyes shut, rubbing his temples. It would expand their relationship from psychological to include actual treatment. Will pulls a face turning onto his side.

Maybe not.

Maybe later.

Wounded man

Chapter Notes

> Written on bluetooth keyboard and mobile on vacation. You find errors - tell me or keep them, please :P

"Shhhhhh shhhhh...."

It reverberates through Will's skull, like the uneasy echo of nails scratching over a chalkboard. Will swallows, turning back to his notes, rubbing his jaw silently. Reenvisioning the Ripper's kill had felt... intimate, like putting on a second skin. Will remembers it vividly, the dark glee that shuddered through him when she turned and saw him, how his lips had twitched in a brutal imitation of a smile.

Envisioned of course.

Will swallows again and rubs his left temple, the notes in front of his eyes swimming. Gideon -feels- wrong. Just wrong. As wrong as enjoying the kill. Enjoying gourging her eyes out.

Fuck. Will throws his pen onto the table and leans back, rubbing his eyes. He reopens them slowly, unfocused on the clock on the wall of his lecture hall. Just enough time before his next lecture to get a second opinion... Will swallows again, yearning suddenly for the possibility to talk about it. Talk about it -all-. He grabs his keys before he can think too much about it, the short trip to his car thankfully void of human interaction, everbody else out for lunch. He hesitates, the little space a bubble of reality and peace and then he decides to call, not particularly eager to brave that interstate for nothing.

The phone rings thrice, just long enough for Will to second guess himself, snapping back to it when the line clicks.

"Hello?"

Will opens his mouth and then snaps it close again, trying to make sense of the relief he feels when he hears Hannibal's voice. He shakes his head, his other hand tracing the steering wheel absentmindedly, clearing his throat.

"Hello Dr. Lecter. I... was wondering if I could come in for a quick..."

Will pauses, frowning. Why -does- he want to come in? He works his jaw and then grinds the words out, tasting heavy and sour in his mouth.

"I could use your expertise as a sounding board."

The line is silent for a split second, and then Hannibal's voice comes, calm and full of a regret Will can feel almost too much.

"I am sorry, Will. I have some private business to attend to. However, I do not need to leave for a few minutes. Why don't you talk to me now?"

Will sighs, his head dropping back to hit against the backrest repeatedly. Why is he so disappointed? He shakes his head to clear it and then clicks his tongue, his tone lacerated by dark humor.

"I'm not sure I can, my thoughts are still unsorted and... unsavory. I had hoped I could sort them out on the way to you, to be frank."

A small chuckle along the line and Will cannot help but echo it, his hand on the steering wheel a fist now, bumping against it. He sighs again, the words coming in a rush.

"I reenacted a Ripper kill today... I... "

There is another small pause and then Hannibal's voice comes, very warm, a deep rumble, but somehow... careful.

"How very interesting. How did it feel like, Will?"

Will licks his lips, his eyes closing. His mind flashes back for a moment, remembering, the answer almost inaudible.

"Too good."

Hannibal hums, the sound of his tongue clicking coming along the line.

"And how does this feeling feel to -you- Will?"

Will shakes his head on the headrest, pressing the phone tightly. He swallows, his words pressed, tasting bile.

"Addictive."

Another small pause and Will has the distinct impression that Hannibal tries several approaches before he answers, his tone a calming balm.

"The mirror neurons in your brain will make it so, you know that Will. There is nothing wrong if the visions you create produce the corresponding feelings as well."

Will hisses through clenched teeth, spitting the words out.

"It is WRONG!"

"As with every thing, it is in the eye of the Beholder, Will. You know this better than most."

Will pulls a face, shaking his head once more.

"I should not be able to enjoy this."

"Should and is are often exclusive. Your enjoyment will not cause someone's death."

Will is silent for a long moment, feeling something settle deep in his stomach. He inhales, shudderingly, his eyes reopening. He watches the other lecturers come back over the parking lot, laughing with colleagues. His hand clenches on the steering wheel, knuckles white. His words are quiet, almost toneless.

"I guess. Thank you Dr. Lecter. I will see you in a while."

He clicks off, vaguely aware this might be considered rude but not able to care right now. There is an empty feeling in his stomach, churning, demanding and ... desiring. Will swallows.

This didn't help. Better get back to work then.

******

The click as the line goes dead is like a whiplash in your ear and you snarl, silently. This was no successful conversation. If anything, this drove him away a bit. You glower at the figure on the other side of the room, picking at some fluff on their coat nonchalantly. His voice rings out, gently amused, picking up your mood and the underlying reason easily.

"Now, Hannibal, nobody said it would be easy, did they...."

He sighs, mouth twitching in a little smile before his gray eyes raise and lock onto yours, the connection heavy and immediate.

"I don't have to remind you this cannot be rushed. While the coven is ... delighted that you have finally chosen, the subject of your attention is very much a topic of conversation."

You grind your teeth, unwilling to defend yourself. Robertas sighs and then steps near, cloak draped neatly over his arm.

"Given his instability and status, there might be some need for him to prove himself to the coven."

You frown, allow the confusion to color your voice.

"He is not even in the circle, Uncle."

Robertas nods, shrugging one shoulder in a weirdly elegant way.

"I am aware."

He leans close and you have to fight the urge to lean away, another vampire so close to your jugular something that is only reserved for a mate. In normal circumstances. You fight and incline your head, allowing him even closer, the hum of appreciation along the family bond a subtle reward. Robertas clicks his tongue, tone low.

"There is another, trying to prove his worth. I have a feeling he might cross your paths, soon."

You exhale, harshly, turning your head to catch his eye, keeping your voice almost inaudible.

"Giving out this knowledge is a dangerous thing, Uncle."

His teeth are sharp when he smiles, his response carried on a dangerous chuckle.

"Oh yes."

Robertas smirks at you and then steps back, the relief palpable. He sighs and then raises his eyebrows, tone light and bored again, amused.

"And now, come on Hannibal. The coven wants you to appoint the soprano for the "Hunger Relief" concert after all. Time to spend some time with your kin."

You smile a smile you don't feel and go and fetch your coat, your mind churning.

****

You reach for him again, later, delighted when you feel it catch hold. A subtle pull, frayed at the edges but there, calming for your nerves.

****

So tired. He is soooo tired. Will rubs his eyes, the headache behind them a constant now, adding to his overall feeling of uneasiness, his skin prickling. A shadow and a soft pull across his consciousness and he looks up through his fingers, the lecture hall empty. Slow, steady sounds of hooves, foreboding and surreal, the beasts mighty antlers pushed into the room with deliberate tilts of the head. They glint, dark, like polished wood, no trace of antler's wool on them. The bluish feathers gleam in the low light, accentuating the massive body, rustling with every step. Will is fixated on it, feeling the need to touch, to thread his fingers through the... fur, feel if it really is made out of feathers. He watches it come closer, calm and sure, his own state of mind slowly aligning with it, accepting and then...

"Will?"

He jars back to reality, the vision evaporating like a dream of smoke and mirrors, leaving him bereft. He swallows, raising his eyes to Alana and Jack instead, vaguely disappointed for a reason he cannot name.

"You look like you were dreaming."

Her voice is kind and yet carries a note of worry, just enough interest to deflect. Will feels caught in the act somehow, like having done something imprudent, another feeling he cannot

quite explain. He is aware that he is vaguely defensive but unable to help himself, unsettled at himself that he would have preferred to stay in the... dream?

"Yeah, I was thinking about something else."

Indeed. He watches Jack look around, none too interested in his state of mind.

"Well, here's something for you to think about: We have a direct way of communicating with the Chesapeake Ripper and we have to see if we can push him."

Uneasiness solidifies in Will's stomach, his mind providing the answer already but wanting to hear it from Jack.

"Push him... towards what?"

Alana interjects, obviously in the know already.

"We might be able to influence him to become visible."

"If we can enrage him."

It's ridiculuous. The last person you might want to enrage is the Chesapeake Ripper. Will cannot keep the dry laugh in, his mind spinning, sluggishly.

"To what purpose Jack? I don't see what you're asking."

Jack's voice is imploring, like is his gaze, heavy on Will.

"Do you think there's a way to push the Chesapeake Ripper and focus his attention?"

It really is ridiculous. And Will is sooo tired.

"He is already focused on Gideon as his adversary. Don't fool around?"

"Gideon is just a tabloid rumor right now. We need to make him the truth."

Bile. It tastes bitter in Will's mouth, mixing with derision.

"You might push the ripper to kill again, just to prove he is not in a hospital for the criminal insane!"

Jack's voice is hard.

"I have to push, Will."

Oh no. Will pushes forward, a lot more awake suddenly.

"Are you thinking about getting into bed with Freddie Lounds?"

Jack only confirms, using Will's own words.

"You said it yourself, Miss Lounds is the best way to bait the Chesapeake Ripper."

Well damn. Will mentally rolls his eyes at himself, suddenly exhausted at what will happen. He stares at the back of the lecture hall and the space between Alana and Jack, wishing for the stag to come back and dip the world back into surreality. At least that dream he could wake up from.

****

You should not get so riled up over a tabloid interview. Of course it doesn't help that you know they are doing it on purpose. And it's all just a game.

And yet.

There is no way you will let it stand.

You have a reputation to lose after all.

****

You invite Alana and Frederick over for dinner in order to catch up on the investigation. It really is beyond annoying and yet highly amusing to hear their insufficient theories. Psychic driving. The subject must not be aware. You hide your smile and refill their glasses, deciding to needle Jack a bit more.

So much to do, suddenly.

It's exhilarating.

****

You wished Jack would have brought his wife, but then you more than understand. You wonder if you can use her somehow.

He is so upset, but hiding it well. You put on your best sympathetic person suit, just for him. Best to be believed to be his best friend.
"What would be the benefit of making you believe your trainee was alive?"

The answer comes grudgingly but immediately, the amber liquid swirling around in the tumbler.

"Hope. The Ripper wanted to cloud my vision in the fog of hope."

You wonder if this is a fitting description. Your thoughts flit back to the coven's meeting, the thinly veiled inquiries, all prodding. Why him? Do you really think it would work? Do you really think he will come to you, willingly? Him? An ex-cop, now FBI, an almost hermit?

Your eyes twitch, refusing to allow the negativity to take hold. Maybe Jack is onto something here. The fog of hope, indeed. The words come from deep within you, acknowledging.

"It can sometimes be brave to allow yourself hope."

Jack's rebuke is immediate, his perception extremely sharp and world-wise.

"Not the false kind."

It lodges itself within your gut, the underlying sentiment that it may not be worth it. You inhale a whiff of the cognac, refusing to doubt yourself. Jack's words pull you back.
"I'm not here to talk about the Ripper. It was a mistake for me to come to you the other day, asking about my wife and her therapy."

Ah. Beautiful Bella. Beauty sharpened and enhanced by the impending death, frailty condensed into ferocity. You wonder how much Jack knows.
"Not to worry. I won't discuss your visits with her anymore than I'll discuss her visits with you."

"Please don't."

You almost laugh, Jacks answer so obviously a lie. Very well then.
"May I ask when your trainee disappeared, how long before you gave up hope?"

You try not to regard him too closely on this. It is so very interesting to see their reaction to your games. Especially since this game is still very much afoot.
"Started the minute they told me she was missing. Gave up more every minute that passed after that."

How interesting. Not a friend of hope. You decide to lodge the blade deeper.

"How long until you give up on your wife?"

You keep pushing, recognizing the turning point. The possibility to gain further trust.

"Don't give up hope. Not yet. She's lost hope. Which means you
can't."

Sarcasm coloring his tone, in combination with fatalism.
"You think I have control of that?"

No you don't. The words are heavy on your tongue, felt on a personal level. Hope truly is painful sometimes.

"Take control."

Resistance and Jack tries to push back, almost attacking. You wonder if he does this with Will as well.

"You keep trying to be my psychiatrist, Dr. Lecter."
"Because I believe you need one."

"That makes one of us."
"I'm sorry about your wife, Jack. I truly am. I believe the world is a better place with her in it. And I'm sorry about your trainee.
"Whatever the Ripper was doing, it worked. I thought she was alive. For a moment, anyway. I allowed myself to believe what I knew was impossible. I got played.
"Indulge me. Talk to me about her. What was her name?"
"Miriam Lass. A very brave young woman."

Oh yes. You can still feel her heartbeat under your fingertips where you pressed them into her carotid. How you had to avert your head, first from her fighting fingers and then from the almost overwhelming urge to sink your teeth into her throat, so close, the blood calling to you.

It really had been very close that day for Miriam Lass. A long day with inane and weak people, the sun hot ouside. You had not been able to feed on your emergency rations when she had knocked, so perceptive. Something had stayed your hunger though, something not easily explained. Only later you had found out that she had been Jack's trainee, a truly lucky coincidence. And truly brave in the face of the prospect of losing her arm.

Refocusing her had been fun.

And you even had been able to drink some of her blood while she had been unconscious, finally getting that taste.

It hadn't been enough to sate the hunger of course.
But then it never is.

Good thing you are not a fledgling anymore.

You hide your smile by taking a sip of the cognac, your teeth throbbing for a moment.

The firelight plays on Jack's face and throat, the drumming of his heartbeat visible for a moment in it's movement, calling to you. Someday, perhaps. For now he is too important and interesting a player.

Anticipation.

Almost as good as the real thing.

First taste

Chapter Notes

I included a (part of a) rewrite of my own story here, in case you guys notice. :)

Also: still written on vacation so let me know if you find errors!

And - do you like?!? :)

It's a "must" event for the coven members of Baltimore, and one you had been looking forward to for months. Well, before you had ran into -him- in that rather ugly office.

You pull at the fly with deliberate patience, trying to mask your annoyance, the smoking gleaming in the low light.

You yourself had cast the soprano just a few days prior, her fire something you truly admire. Honed to perfection with some of the last castrates quite a while back. Very fitting for the Arias she will perform tonight.

At least something.

There is an impression of energy and then Robertas steps up to you, resplendent in his own suit.

"This may be the first time I see you hesitant to attend a coven concert."

You exhale, slightly unnerved that he can look so easily through you, but then you share blood.

"If it is true that someone endeavors to prove himself, some of the coven might try to enforce Will Graham's proving as well."

Robertas hums, weighing his head.

"Not necessarily. It might even be to your advantage. You know how they all -love- to gossip. With another candidate they might not press you too strongly."

You drop your hands, watching both your reflections in the mirror. How funny to think you would show no reflection, the legend probably borne from the fact that your movements while hunting simply too are too fast to properly discern for them. Reflection or not.

Robertas steps up, placing his hand onto your shoulder for a moment, the squeeze heavy and almost painful.

"Come. Let us not tally too long. You know how Lucille despises tardiness. In others, at least.
"

You nod and get your coat, doing your very best not to look at the phone display and not succeeding. No calls. You grind your teeth and put on a smile, the vibrant energy imprints mingling at the opera house across town beckoning.

****

She is perfection. The pitch is sublime, her voice drawing you in immediately, calling to what society calls a soul. You allow yourself to wallow in the feeling, the emotional response beautiful. It almost masks the annoying looks from behind and across the line completely. Almost.

You withdraw when the applause ends and get yourself a glass of champagne, the tart taste pleasant on your tongue. You feel her before you hear her, her presence dominating the room.

"Lucille. I hope my choice has not disappointed."

You say it with an aborted little bow, sure to bring a smile to her lips, the almost ancient vampire done up extravagantly, still enjoying life to the fullest. It is a must for survival, the lust and need for life. And the hunger. You smile softly, feeling the mortals around them drift by, two of them lingering.
Interesting. Your thoughts return to your coven leader when she lightly claps you on the arm, clicking her tongue, her tone taking on a playfully blaming nuance, encompassing her entourage with her words.
"It’s been too long since you’ve properly cooked for us, Hannibal."
You put on a smile you only feel in part, though the prospect of a dinner would fit nicely with your other games. Something to keep in mind then.
"Come over and I will cook for you."
Her eyes flash, fully aware of the difference, her tone teasing.

"I said properly. Means dinner and the show. Have you seen him cook? It’s an entire performance. He used to throw such exquisite dinner parties. You heard me. Used to."

A feast for the coven would need a Ripper kill. You smile softly, a part of you already looking forward to it, going through your mental rolodex.
"I will again. Once inspiration strikes. I cannot force a feast. A feast must present itself."

She rebukes with humor and you have the distinct impression that she will not take 'no' for an answer.

"It’s a dinner party, not a unicorn."

Indeed. All the unicorns have been killed after all. You wonder briefly how many she might have hunted down in her youth.
"But the feast is life. You put the life in your belly and you live."

The mortals around you are charmed, and Lucille gives you a darkly amused look, her entourage taking her cues from you. It is a good thing that she is always so delighted in your games, her patronage probably the reason why no enforcers have interfered with your private business.

She turns after a moment, indicating Tobias and Franklyn, standing off to the side, whom she had ignored until now.

Interesting.
"I believe that young man is trying to get your attention."

You turn slightly, offering a neutral greeting, trying not to look too interested. It must be Franklyn's company.

"Hello."

Franklyn nods back, nervous, some spider sense in the back of his brain probably informing him of his low life expectancy in this circle. Or would be, in other times. These times, the carefully kept illusion has to hold.

"Hi! Nice to see you. This is my friend, Tobias."

You intensify your smile just a fraction, finally able to look at the man properly. Good looking, trained. Smooth. And probably a musician, going by Lucille's tastes.

"Good evening."

Barely veiled astonishment, hidden in subtle interest. A gleam in her eyes, addressing you directly.
"How do you two know each other?"

You decide to tease her a bit, though wise enough not to ignore a direct question completely. You feel Robertas gaze from across the room like a lead weight, his uncle keeping away on purpose. Probably knew who Tobias was already.
"There should remain some mystery to my life outside the opera."

Franklyn barges in, needing to answer the unspoken question.
"I’m one of his patients."

You grind your teeth for a moment, catching the amused and yet way too interested look Lucille throws you when she hears the sound, your one advantage regarding Tobias gone now. No matter. You tilt your head a bit, pushing back to neutral ground.
"Did you enjoy the performance?"

Franklyn responds immediately, oblivious to the power exchange happening.
"I loved it. Every minute."

You catch a tilt of her head in the corner of your eye, signaling growing interest in his discomfort. Time to end this.

"Don’t say too much. You must leave something for us to discuss next week. Franklyn, good to see you."

You shake Franklyn's hand and Tobias' hand to signal the end of the conversation, noting how Tobias' hand feels slightly different. So he has been fed already. Definitely within the circle then, most likely trying to prove himself. On the second stage then, already.

"Franklyn. Tobias."

They leave and you keep the smile, look around the company you keep. Her smile is way too knowing and her gaze flits over to Robertas for a moment before returning to you. Time to appease her. A good thing that you oversaw the buffet as well.

"Who’s hungry?"

******

You come back home late, the rest of the evening an ongoing tease by Lucille, trying to prod information out of you. At some point Robertas interfered, his status high enough to call an end to it, though it makes you feel uneasy, knowing you are in his debt now. The coven event itself had been an informal one, luckily, their elders only wanting to check on them. Not much need for war council these days.

You enter your bedroom, pulling the clothes off one by one. You return to your bed when you have hung the smoking away, pushing yourself up the bed on your back, the sheets smooth on your skin. The mirror catches the motion and the ripples of the sheet as you push your hands across it.

It's like an itch under your skin, and one you cannot refuse to scratch. You close your eyes, concentrating and feel it gathering, the answering echo mirrored somehow, meaning he is awake. And yet it holds, just for a moment, delight rushing through you. You smile, fully and honestly this time, letting your teeth drop, elated. You take some of your special reserve to feed yourself, the provider of this special bottle long gone, their taste rolling off your tongue.

Rushing in your veins.

****

The vision comes to life easily, the hotel room bathed in muted colors. Will's heartbeat shudders in his ears, slowly turning to steps and then to hooves, clicking on the ground.

Will watches the majestic beast trod into the bathroom before him, immense and yet soothing, the need to follow like a gravitational pull. Inescapable. Will exhales and then follows it, feeling a rush of adrenaline, shuddering through him. The vision morphs and Will accepts the rush, the imagined scalpel feeling good in his hand. The blood is slick and thick, coating his skin, the smell of copper everywhere.

Resplendent somehow.

****

You inhale deeply before opening the door, making sure your person suit is in place. Smiling genially.

"Good morning. Please come in."

You lead him in, sheepishly silent, obviously aware that your meeting at the opera had not been the best.

"Would you like to discuss our chance encounter?"

Fidgeting. You almost feel bad to pretend it had been by chance. Well almost. You flash back to that soiled napkin and decide to not feel like that.
"Wasn’t all together chance. I kinda thought you’d be there, which isn’t why I was there. I was there because I like that sort of thing. Just occurred to me you might, too.

Obviously. You would have been there even if it hadn't been a coven meet up. You incline your head, your voice still genial.

"In fact, I do."
"I was trying to get your attention."

You sigh internally, this human being so purely naive.

"I was aware of that."

"I knew you were aware, even though you pretended that you weren’t. It felt like you were rejecting me."

If only people would employ their brain at times... You smile a bit to soften the blow.

"It would be unethical to approach a patient or acknowledge in any way our relationship outside this room until that patient gives consent."

He is disturbed by the reminder of our professional relationship and you feel a referral looming, just as he starts to claim the need for a personal one.

"I don’t really know who you are outside this room."

And what a good thing that is for his personal safety. You hide your smile, your gums itching.

"I’m your psychiatrist."

His response is very flat, speaking of deeper hurts. Maybe that would be something to inquire in further.

"I feel rejected again."
"Why do you suppose that is?"
"Cause I want you to be my friend."

You answer absolutely honestly this time, trying to drive the point home.

"Of course you do. I have intimate knowledge of you."

"And you like the same things I do. I think we’d be good friends. It makes me sad I have to pay you."

Ahhh, but you wouldn't have him as a good friend. You would have him as good food... You let your teeth drop just a millimeter for a moment, pricking your own tongue on the tip. You wonder if the blood Tobias' received was given orally as well. Time to change the subject.

"Tell me about Tobias."

"Tobias is my best friend, but I am not Tobias’s best friend. He has cancelled on me so many times. He almost didn’t come to the show. But he sure took an active interest in my active interest in you."

That is truly interesting. You wonder for a split second if Tobias' ambitions are even higher than achieving the third stage.

You wonder if Lucille might even be aware of this.
"Have you put Tobias on a pedestal?"

"Yes and he saw a higher pedestal."

Did he now. You narrow your eyes a fraction, trying once more to reason. All things considered, Franklyn is one of the more... relaxing patients after all.
"I am a source of stability and clarity, Franklyn, not your friend."

"I’m a great friend. I was listening to Michael Jackson last night and I burst into tears. My eyes are burning right now even talking about it. You know what I think makes me the most sad about him dying? I will never meet him.
I feel if I had been his friend, I could have saved him from himself."

Save him from himself... It is something Will wishes for, secretly. And you, you wish to enhance him, unleash him as it were. It is a saving of its own kind... Your mouth waters for a

moment as you envision what his turning might entail, how he would manifest. You return to your patient, honestly interested for once.

"In this Michael Jackson fantasy, how is your friendship returned?"

"I just get to touch greatness."

Something vibrates within your body, giddily anticipating. You ignore the little voice of doubt, warning you that he may not be ready soon.

Time is such a fleeting thing.

It won't matter, eventually.

******

You go to see her that evening, eager to... sparr a bit. How refreshing to speak with someone in the circle. Since she is a provider, -your- provider at that even, your conversations are always double layered. Always so delightful.

She opens the door, resplendent in her own way, coifed to perfection, her demeaner graceful and fine.

"Good afternoon. Please come in." You enter her home, appreciating the low lights and muted tones. She is somewhat distant today and you narrow your eyes, descretely scenting the air. Notes of citrus and a sour basetone. Jealousy. How interesting.

Bedelia sits down in front of you, perfectly poised, as always, her voice neutral... too neutral. You hide your smile, deciding to enter the game, the additional layers always so entertaining.

"This always goes better if I'm perfectly honest with you."
You raise your eyebrows, throwing back carefully.

"What would be the point otherwise."
A well prepared answer, her words just short of accusatory.

"Well, one of us has to be honest."

Now this is interesting. Does she think she has been replaced? You feel a smile tug at the corner of your mouth, the status she has a pale comparison to your plans with Will after all.
"I'm honest."
Almost defiantly. You wonder who has called her.

"Not perfectly."

You twitch an eyebrow, something you know she finds annoying.
"As honest as anyone." An inhale, trying to stay calm. She knows too much to get too riled

up, and, of course, her goal is to be initiated... it wouldn't help for her to aggravate a coven member.

"Not really. I have conversations with a version of you and hope the actual you gets what he needs."
"A version of me?"
"Naturally, I respect its meticulous construction, but you are wearing a very well tailored person suit."
This time the smile breaks free just a bit, your amusement about her phrasing too strong.

"Do you refer to me as Person Suit with your psychiatrist friends?"

It's a thinly veiled threat and a warning, telling her you know that she spoke to -someone-. You could probably discern it from her blood, some image too clear, but... you hesitate, probing your feelings. Too easy. You lock eyes with her as she continues, trying to deflect.

"I don't discuss patients with my psychiatrist friends, particularly since I only have one patient who chose to ignore my retirement."

You continue to tease her, pushing just a bit.

"A patient who wears a Person Suit."

She weighs her head, amending a bit, probably wondering if she pushed too far, revealed too much.
"I can still see the shape of you, but you're elegantly obstructed. So really, it's less of a person suit and more of a human veil."

Now, what a perfect phrasing. You adapt it, the tongue-in-cheek wording not lost on her.

"I prefer we call it a human shield."
"I'm sure you do. You're a complicated man, Hannibal. I imagine that must be lonely."

Fishing for reassurances. Obviously she does not know -who- or -what- has happened yet... just that it happened.
"I have friends. And the opportunities for friends."

She tries to strengthen her own position, her voice gentling on the blow.
"On the other side of the veil."

Not for very much longer if you can help it. Still, it might be wise to reassure her, for now.
"You and I are friendly."

She doesn't buy into it, not fully, her ego probably bruised a bit.

"Yes, and when your hour is up, I'll pour you a glass of wine, nevertheless I'll be drinking mine on this side of the veil."

Mhh, she could provide for someone else. You are honestly curious for once.

"Why do you bother?"

"I see enough of you to see the truth of you. And I like you."

Yes. That you know, her body coming apart under your fingers on a regular basis after all. You smile, watching her answering smile reach her eyes for just a split second.

"Red or white."

You inhale, probing your feelings for a split second. You watch her red lips, pursed just so, her lips taking on a slightly less prominent tone in your mind for a moment.
"I think something pink, don't you?"

Bedelia hesitates, her expression taking on a regretful countenance.

"I am sorry, I do not have a rose wine sufficient for your tastes, Hannibal."

You click your tongue, looking away for a second.
She always tastes better on wine.

"Would you amendable to transpose this meeting to my office then? I have a very fine rose wine we could... both appreciate."

She raises her chin and her legs shift a bit. You smile at her, almost tasting her on your tongue already.

******

You make good use of the chaiselongue this time, making very sure she receives her pleasure first, noting distantly that you should do something about her taste. Maybe some oysters and snails would further improve it. And go very well with the wine. You feel her shudder to completion again and you grin, moving your mouth just a bit before biting down. She convulses on the couch, a low scream leaving her mouth, the opiates in your spit prolonging her pleasure.

It's a good thing his appointment is still an hour away.

Although it might be interesting as to how he would react.

You bite down harder, your mind envisioning possible futures until you have to take yourself in hand, satiation easily for once.

Let her think it is her doing. It will only serve you in the long run.

******

You open the door, his presence like a refreshing and yet relaxing blanket for your nerves, your senses tingling in anticipation. There is a note to his smell, more prominent than before and he runs a slight fever, not yet aware.

So very interesting in his absolute totality.

Beautiful.

"Good evening. Please come in."

He seats himself in his seat and you wonder when that may have happened, and despite the fact that others sit in there as well.
He eyes the glass of wine that still stands next to your seat, his face a mixture of envy and repulsion and desperation.

"Have you been drinking?"

Yes. That, too. You lick your teeth, fully sated.
"I had a glass of wine with my last appointment."

"You drank with a patient?"

You hide your smile, the almost visible yearning poorly hidden.

"She drank with a patient. I have an unconventional psychiatrist."

A sigh, his dry response instant and not feeling any need to hide it. So refreshing.

"We have that in common."

You decide to ask the question, wondering how far you may have come already.
"Am I your psychiatrist or are we simply having conversations?"

He smiles and you feel it echo on your own face, noting the dark circles under his eyes.
"Yes, I think is the answer to that."

Well then.
"Then having a glass of wine before seeing a patient, I assure you, is very conventional. Particularly for evening appointments."

You get up to go and get a glass, wondering for a moment whether you should and then deciding to go for it, reaching for the little pills while getting the new glass.

"How long have you been seeing a psychiatrist?"
You smirk, hiding your own reasons in the obvious ones.

"Since I chose to be a psychiatrist."

"So these are just conversations."

His voice carries a note of disappointment, and you are quick to assure.

"With your friend, the psychiatrist. We do have a higher level of intimacy than the common Doctor Patient relationship. Almost as though we have a daughter together."

You say it with a slight tongue-in-cheek tone but it falls flat, and you silently compliment yourself for deciding to help him relax, the little pill still hidden between your fingers.

"I don’t have a lot of friends."

'There won't be that many in your life either.' You don't say it but then you know just too well, your special status in this world not exactly helping with this.
"Having a better understanding of why people do what they do doesn’t make it any easier to socialize."

He raises his eyes to you, silently asking for confirmation and you compliment yourself again on the ultraviolet-filtering-curtains again, his eyes a dark stormy blue that you feel you could drown in.

"Is it easy for you?"

No. Not easy. But it is easier when you have something to look forward to. Someone. Your answer is totally honest for once.

"I cope."
You pour the wine and your fingers crumble the pill easily, something relaxing only, dissolving in the rose liquid within an instant. You watch it disappear, refusing to feel bad about it, even -him - part of a goal to be achieved after all.
You change the subject, not wanting him to dwell too much on negativity and way too curious about the current state of affairs as well.

"Chesapeake Ripper has struck again."

He refutes your argument instantly, so sure of himself and you compliment him in the privacy of your own head, enjoying the fire in his eyes.

"It’s not the same guy."

How you wished you could just confirm his theories... but ultimately, that game has to be played apart from the one your playing with him. You click your tongue in your mouth, dragging your mind away from the fact that the game with him isn't a game at all.
"The victims were all brutalized. What was the brutalization hiding?"

He recites his answer, obviously given before and just as enthusiastic.

"Careful, surgical removal and preservation of vital organs."

Delicious organs. Ah, the irony.

"Valuable organs."

He frowns, swirling the wine in his glass a bit, derailed just a bit. You want to smoothe the skin with your tongue.

"Organ harvesters?"

You allow yourself a small shrug, expanding your ... idea.
"Jack Crawford's looking for a serial killer he can't seem to catch. It's a brilliant diversion."

Repulsion. You can taste it emanating off of him in waves, transported so easily on his scent. He paces, agitated.

„Now there's a theory… I'll keep it in mind if another body drops."

You fold your hands, watching Will with warm eyes, watching as he takes another sip. Content. You watch as his Adam's apple bops with the swallow, stretching the white skin.

„Please do."

Will turns away and then drains the glass. He starts when you get up and walk over to him, quietly, refilling Will's glass, equally quietly. A small pause as you both drink in silence, and then you break it gently, hovering behind him, just out of reach. Basking in his scent.

„Is it Jack who has you so unsettled?"

He starts a bit with the direct question, slowly rolling his shoulders and neck, eyebrows raising.

„Well, it's not helping that Jack wishes to kill the Ripper himself, that's for sure."

You smirk a bit, aware that he can probably see the reflection of it in the window.

„Does he, now…"

He echoes the smirk and then chuckles, already so much more relaxed and aware that he needs it. The drug you have given him loosens his tongue, his request very direct. Well, for him.

„Ahh, I wish you could give me some of your relaxation. It must be nice to not always feel on edge."

You tilt your head, trying not to jump at the opportunity, watching him watch your reflection, playing the responsible physician to perfection.

„Have you been having trouble sleeping, Will?"

He snorts, shrugging lightly, amusement coloring his tone.

„No more than usual.“

You weigh your head a bit more and then step near, wanting to watch Will's throat work as he drains the second glass, the veins in stark relief for just a second.

„And yet in dire need of it, or so it seems. As your Doctor, I will not accept a refusal, Will, you will stay in one of my guest rooms.“

His mouth opens a bit, unsure as to how to respond for just a second, turning a bit too fast, his hand waving around.

„Wha..? No, no, no, no, no, Hannibal, I need to go home.“

You regard him with profound kindness and amusement, deeply appreciative of the blush creeping into his cheeks.

„You have fed and walked your dogs before you came here, have you not? Well, then you will return early tomorrow, since you need to go and teach in Quantico tomorrow around noon after all, am I correct?“

He works his jaw for a moment, the muscles in his cheek jumping. He swirls the last drops around in the glass for a long moment, a clock chiming softly in the background, announcing the full hour and it seems to strike down his walls with the gong, beat by beat.

„You are. But only if you have more of -this-.“
He toasts you lightly with the glass and you wink at him, taking the glass from him.

„Of course.“

You turn away slightly, hesitating, trying to discern how fast the drug might fully unfold its effect. You lock eyes with him after a moment, putting some weight behind your words.

„We will take a cab to my house, later, then. I am afraid I only have this particular wine here now, and it is always bad taste to mix the flavors.“

Will shrugs slightly, tone a bit gruff.

„Guess we can just keep talking then… not overly relaxing though.“

You regard him for a moment, almost smirking before stepping up to the cabinet and retrieving another bottle, opening it there, fingers tracing down the wood in consideration, smirking slightly.

„You could always take the couch, Will.“

This time Will snorts fully, turning towards the stars again, snickering still when he takes another full glass. He shakes his head, flashing a smile.

„No I could not.“

You smirk at him and then lightly toast him with your own still half full glass and Will raises his own, frowning when he sees something in the liquid.

„Oh, there seems something in there …“

He looks down at it, and you try to take the glass from him, your cold heart skipping a beat, recognizing the tiny morsel of the pill easily, furious at yourself for the slip.
He waves you off, uncaringly.

„No, don’t worry, it seems to be just a bit of cork from the stopper…“

He drags it out with the tip of his finger and wipes the little morsel off on a napkin and you watch it disappear, feeling relieved. Will shrugs lightly and then grins at you, taking a deep swallow of the wine. You force a smile and then follow suit and Will inhales deeply, drifting over to the sketches on the back table after a moment, gazing at your drawings.

You step up to him after a moment, as if drawn by a string, watching him gaze at your work, imagining him gazing at your more creative endeavors. He is so close to where Miriam Lass stood when you strangled her to unconsciousness... You can almost feel his throat under your fingers, the thunder of his beating heart calling to you.

He is aware of you and welcomes it, almost fully relaxed now, shoulders falling a bit. He inhales deeply, taking another sip, obviously feeling secure enough to tease and call you out.

„Anything interesting to be gleaned watching me gaze at your drawings?“

He turns his head slightly to look at your profile and you quickly hide your hunger, aware it must have shown on your face.
You click your tongue, shrugging lightly.

„I like looking at the people experiencing my drawings.“

Will hums, his finger pushing the papers apart carefully.

„Mhhh, experiencing. Did you experience all of these motifs?“

He pushes the papers fully apart, revealing the nude forms of a male and a female act. He shoots a look at you, waiting, taking another sip. Not judging. You narrows his eyes, leaning close for a moment, beyond delighted and deciding to tease him.

„Maybe.“

You chuckle and Will chimes in, breaking your gaze after a moment. He inhales deeply, eyes flitting around the room, the words coming as if from far away, a truly pure request.

„Will you help me sleep tonight?“

YES. You want to devour him. Raise your fist in a sign of victory and crowd him against the wall and ravish him. The urge is almost overwhelmingly strong but you force it down, the act

painful in intensity. You step forward, resigning yourself to put your hand on his arm for a moment, feeling the muscles shift.

„It will be my honor.“

Will closes his mouth and grins grimly, frowning slightly. Retracting.

„I don’t know where that came from, I’m just…“

You shake your head, reassuring, squeezing softly.

„It is your exhaustion, begging for relief. This job Jack Crawford has you doing is taking its toll, Will. Let me help you recharge your batteries, so to speak.“

You squeeze again and then push your hand up, clasping Will’s shoulder lightly, pressing gently into direction of the chairs. Will hesitates and then follows the direction, resettling into his chair with a sigh. He drains his glass, watching you step up to the cabinet again, pulling out a big bag. You pull out a syringe and Will’s eyes droop, the alcohol making his senses sluggish apparently. He huffs a laugh and then snorts slightly, putting the glass away with the utmost care, his voice dry.

„Guess this wine hits harder than the whiskey I’m used to.“

You step back up to him, expanding your presence a bit, or more like relaxing it. You smirk at Will and then kneel down next to him, not bothering to keep the slight amusement from your tone.

„I guess it does.“

You hesitate and then hold up the syringe, pushing some of your power into your voice and you see how it takes hold on his befuddled mind, watching you with huge eyes, pupils blown.

„This will help you sleep a deep dreamless sleep later, Will. I will inject you now and then we will take a cab. By the time the bed is ready you will be ready to fall asleep.“

His eyes flit back and forth between yours and you wonder if he can see the hunger there. Something must show because he licks his lips, swallowing. And still he offers his right arm, and you smile at him, pure and true, your own sedate pulse kicking up a bit, your mind providing you with the knowledge that there will be a drop of -his- blood soon, after all.

You unbutton the cuff with deft fingers, refusing to let them shake and push the shirt back slightly, the needle hovering over his skin for a long moment. You raise your eyes at him, suddenly needing the final permission and Will hesitates, his eyes boring into yours, seemingly for eternity before nodding once, jerkily. You push it in, forcing the moan that wants to break free down and he gasps, his head dropping back. You allow yourself a delighted chuckle and then wipe off the little drop of blood that wells up with shaking fingers, aware that he watches you, his head lolling to one side, eyes half lidded.

You bring the drop up to your lips and the hunger claws at you even before you put it on your tongue, the fact that you are well fed only secondary. More more more. The taste is heaven,

even mixed with the drug and his illness, something undefineable -him- calling to you. There is a moment of clarity as you swallow, the doors to your mind flung open for him, the peace beckoning for just an instant leaving you gasping, the fleeting impression of what might be utterly addictive.

You calm your breathing after long moments, forcing yourself back to reality, pressing your fingers into his neck, wanting to feel the blood rush in his veins. You lock eyes with his blown ones, aware that your own are probably equally blown now, equally drugged.

The words come by themselves, echoing the victorious feeling permeating you.

„Thank you for giving me permission, Will. I will be sure to use it.“

He moves his head a bit, eyes unfocused and you hesitate for another long moment before you retrieve the lights, putting on some chamber music. It's going to be a long night.

You don't dare to think about failure. He must come to see it as beautiful. And be able to admit it to himself. Revel in it, even.

He must.

You lick your teeth to retrieve the last taste of him, forcing your throbbing teeth back up, knowing you won't be able to resist when you let them drop.

"Do you believe this is the best way?"

You whirl around, finding Robertas hover over Will, so very close to him you cannot hide the snarl. It echoes through the room and Robertas turns to you, smiling widely, his own fangs proudly displayed. His eyes flash and then he pushes himself up, chuckling.

You want to rip his throat out.

It must show on your face because Robertas keeps his distance while stepping back a bit, his fingers echoing the play of the fugue, playing it in thin air. He eyes you warily with raised eyebrows and you make an effort to compose yourself, pulling the anger inside with difficulty.

You nod, once, waiting until Robertas has seated himself on the chaiselongue again.

"I believe he must be freed of his moral chackles before he can fully embrace what we are... what I am."

Robertas weighs his head, watching the rapid pulse in Will's throat, drumming with a staccato beat.

"He is already able to see it like you do. If you would initiate him, he might see our ways without all this..."

He waves his hand a bit, continuing after a small sound of distaste.

"Hokus Pokus."

You press your lips together for a moment, annoyed and defensive.

"You have not seen his home. He barricades and hides himself from the world, so very intent on using his gift for good. Not able to see how accepting the pull would free him."

You lick your lips, locking eyes with him.

"And it is no Hokus Pokus, it is psychic driving."

Robertas holds up his hands in mock surrender, his voice gentle.

"I was only teasing, Hannibal. But still... I am not sure whether this is a good idea. What if it fails or worse, what if he recoils from it? Will you be able to sever the bond you feel already?"

You turn away, your voice sounding fake even to your own ears.

"I don't feel a bond. And I will kill him if need be."

"Ah."

Robertas sighs and gets back up, turning towards the door.

"Then, by all means Hannibal, continue. But lying to oneself is one's downfall. As you are well aware."

You close your eyes as the door clicks closed, cursing silently. He is right, you admit to yourself. You turn back to Will, watch as he shudders, his eyes unfocused on the light. Your fist clenches, resolution replacing the hunger.

The fugue comes to an end and you start your endeavors just as a new one starts, his heartbeat syncing up after a moment. You inhale deeply, sating yourself on his smell, knowing it will stay within these walls now, changing them forever.

******

You invite Alana over to sous-chef. Trying to discern how Will is holding up, but then her company is always pleasant as well. You watch her swallow the especially brewed beer, her skin very creamy.

You wished you had tasted her. Honesty colours your discussion with her, the teasing delightful.

Propabilities for the meantime, maybe.

****

Will doesn't show up to his appointment.

You feel... empty. More so than anticipated. It's not entirely unanticipated and yet... You concentrate, feel it catch hold for just a split second before dissipating again, his mind increasingly hard to catch hold off.

Fascinating.

You look up Dr. Sutcliff's number just in case though before you get your keys, turning towards him easily.

****

She is vibrant, her gaze locked with Will's. There is peace for him here, in the two chairs across from each other and Will lets himself fall into it, the strange landscape dark and shadowy and eternal.

Her voice calls him back a bit, echoing in the void.

"Dad..."

He reacts to it, wondering for just a split second how right it feels.

"Yes..."
There is something pushing itself into the void, erasing her presence, replacing it, bringing peace and war in equal measure. Will can feel it like a magnetic pull, tugging at his consciousness.

"There’s someone else here."

Will inhales, allowing himself to feel the presence, drawn to it. His mind supplies feathers for a moment before he opens his eyes, the dark nighttime wilderness and the stag's head between him and Abigail fade away, reality jarring back into focus in form of his lecture hall.

"Will?"

Will blinks and glances up to see Hannibal, smiling at him, red eyes gleaming in the low light.

"I’ve a 24-hour cancellation policy."

Will starts a bit, feeling dread settle in his stomach.

"What time is it?"

"Nearly 8 o'clock."

Fuck. Will rubs his hands over his face for a moment, voice muffled but sincere.

"I'm sorry."

Hannibal's smile is sincere as well, his open gaze seeing too much and Will feels flayed open, seen. It's nerve-wrecking.

"No apology necessary."

Will frowns a bit, unsettled.

"I must have fallen asleep. Was I sleepwalking?"

Hannibal clicks his tongue, words very precise, increasing the uneasy feeling in Will's stomach.
"You weren't present. Your eyes were open, staring into middle-distance."

Will snorts a bit, derision coloring his tone.

"I felt like I was asleep. I need to stop sleeping altogether. Best way to avoid bad dreams."

Something flits over Hannibal's face, turning his attention to the photos, still strewn over Will's desk.

"I can see why you have bad dreams."

Will smiles a bit bitterly, feeling strangely warm at the words. He weighs his head, truly curious as to what Hannibal might make of this case. This killer. He asks Hannibal directly, unable to keep from teasing, just a bit.

"What do you see, Doctor?"

Hannibal smirks lightly, taking the teasing in stride easily, his voice carrying the amusement freely.
"Sum up the Ripper in so many words? Words are living things. They have personality, point of view, agenda."

Will echoes the amusement, concurring with the assessment, joining in on the joke.

"They're pack hunters."

Hannibal shoots him a look and then studies the photos for a long moment, very astute in his verdict.

"Displaying one's enemy after death has its appeal in many cultures."

Will grins a bit grimly, only refuting the classification, very sure of that fact at least.
"These aren't the Ripper's enemies. These are pests he's swatted."

Hannibal tilts his head, obviously curious, though Will cannot quite say whether it's at his verdict or the fact itself.
"The reward for their cruelty?"

Will lets some of the derision he feels enter his voice, tasting sour on his tongue.

"He's not bothered by cruelty. The reward is for undignified behavior. These dissections are to disgrace them. It's a public shaming."
Hannibal catches on easily, and Will feels relieved at this, the discussion and reflection feeling so easy.

"Takes their organs away because in his mind they don't deserve them?"

Will nods, eyes on the photos, trying to see what he is missing.

"In some way."

Hannibal picks up Miriam Lass' picture, studying it for a moment, his voice slightly curious.

"Jack Crawford's trainee?"
"She's not like the other victims. The Chesapeake Ripper had no reason to humiliate Miriam Lass."

Hannibal narrows his eyes, catching on quickly.
"Seems to me, he was humiliating someone when he cut off her arm."

Will raises his eyebrows for a moment, concurring completely, his voice low.

"He was humiliating Jack Crawford."

Steps sound and Will looks up to find Jack come in, noting distantly how Hannibal keeps in sync with him. His thoughts flit to the fact that normally -he- will sync up, feeling warm at the fact that it is the other way around this time. He catches back on when Jack invites Hannibal to join them and Will closes his eyes for a brief second, feeling... relieved.

******

He watches you perform the inpromptu surgery, his gaze distant somehow. The blood calls to you but you have to tear your gaze away, his eyes seeing something his mind cannot quite comprehend. Not yet. You finish the surgery, his gaze like a lead weight on your face, so aware.

He watches as you step down from the ambulance after, pulling the soiled gloves off. His colleagues have left already or are securing the area and you step up to him, your locked gaze like a lifeline, pulling you in.

You click your tongue, allowing the gaze, your tone very low, his eyes huge on yours.

"What did you see, Will?"

His eyes narrow a bit, flitting back and forth once before locking again, crinkling at the corners.

"You."

Your heart beats once, very hard, your lips pulling into a smile without any thought. He smiles back, very softly for a split second before Jack's voice wrenches him out of that almost trance he fell into.

Oh yes.

Very promising, indeed.

****

You invite him to your dinnertable, intending to present him, albeit unknowing, to your coven masters and Robertas.

And he is on time, a bit early even but carrying a wine bottle and not wearing proper attire. You try to hide your disappointment, ushering him inside, under the pretense that you have to finish separating the blood -now-. He watches you handle the red liquid, his eyes curious and clear though tired, unrepulsed. You wonder if he would still be if he knew who bled for this tonight.

"I have a butcher who carries sow’s blood. Centrifugate, separate the matter from the water. Creates a transparent liquid. Serve with tomatoes in suspension. Everybody will love the sweet taste. Are you sure you can’t stay?"

He fidgets a bit, though his clothes hide it, his response honest.

"I don’t think I’d be good company."
No he wouldn't be good company. He would be perfect company. You grit your teeth, trying to keep the disappointment out of your voice completely, switching the subject.

"I disagree. But before you go, what came of Mr. Silvestri’s donor?"

"You saved his life."

You allow yourself a small smirk, hiding the truth in an expected response.
"Been a long time since I used a scalpel on anything but a pencil."

Somehow he catches on, curiosity piqued, probing, though politely.

"Why did you stop being a surgeon?"
And now for another pretty veiling answer.... you insert a small smile, for effect.

"I killed someone. More accurately, I couldn't save someone. But it felt like killing them."

He doesn't quite buy it. Oh how you wish you could pull off the masks between you.
"You were an Emergency Room surgeon. It has to happen from time to time."

Time to appeal to his humanity then. You almost shrug, pausing to seem reflective.
"It happened one time too many. I transferred my passion for anatomy into the culinary arts. I fix minds instead of bodies and no one's died as a result of my therapy."

He accepts it, nodding to himself. He offers the wine bottle, his tone carrying a note of... something.

"I should go. I've got a date with the Chesapeake Ripper."

You stop for a moment, wishing fervently, again. You lick your teeth, catching on just to keep the conversation flowing.

"Or is it Rippers?"

Will shakes his head a bit, so sure of himself on this. So very promising.
"Devon Silvestri was harvesting organs but not with the Chesapeake Ripper. No connection between them."

You cannot not, successful at keeping the glee out of your voice at least.
"Jack must be devastated."

And by the look on Will's face he has been open regarding that devastation and disappointment quite publicly and vocally. You make a mental note to prod Jack a bit more, later.
He locks eyes with you again and you return to him, enjoying how the lines change when he smiles.

"Enjoy the wine."

He leaves and you abandon the sauce, catching up with him just in time when he reaches the door. You hold it open, your hand going out to touch his back before you can stop it, feeling the muscles shift as he turns towards his car.

"Good night, Will."

You watch him go, returning to the kitchen after a moment, the wine bottle calling to you. You take it and trace the label for a moment, the wine a very good South African one. You

climb down into the cellar through the latch under the stairs, putting it away carefully, resolving to remove the stairs in the back of the kitchen and add a pantry there, for easier access. Maybe with a hidden level for ... storage. After all the Chesapeake Ripper always lays low for a while. After.

Time to remove one setting from the table.

They arrive fashionable a bit late, as expected, Robertas staying in the back, watching the proceedings. Probably sworn to keep Lucille happy. She has included the opera singer - Aurora - in her entourage, and Hannibal bows down, truly appreciative. Her hand smells of lavender, well fed and you press a kiss to her pulse point, making her giggle. In another time and place you would have sought her out, for a few decades of companionship. And then maybe used her for rejuvenation, taking her in. You smirk, careful not to let the thought enter your features, lest it ruin the evening.

Lucille stems a hand into her hip, teasing but her voice carries an undertone, eyes on the missing place setting.

"I thought you would present someone to us tonight, Hannibal?"

You force a smile, keeping your voice low as you watch Alana being brought in by a sous chef, your words fast.

"Alas, work has kept him from my table tonight. I am afraid I can only present a feast of the more... traditional kind, Lucille."

She clicks her tongue and sighs, overdramatically, turning towards Alana with an exclamation of delight, her hands clasping Alana's.

"Ah, the beautiful Dr. Bloom. How delightful that Hannibal has invited you. You -have- to try the blood sauce later, dear. It is a true epiphany!"

Alana smiles and then tries to respond, but Lucille takes her elbow, pulling her with her to the table, always enjoying the smell of young blood.

You resolve yourself to keep an eye on Alana tonight, not wishing to relocate your life so soon after all.

The sous chef signals you and you extend your hand, stepping up to the top of the table when they are all seated, appreciating their ovations, your eyes seeking out Lucille's for a moment, watching as the coven members eye the sauce and special wine hungrily. You smile, your voice resonating, filled with double meaning.

"Before we begin, you must all be warned: Nothing here is vegetarian."

The coven giggles and Alana chimes in, oblivious and you smile at her, enjoying her innocence wholeheartedly.

To prove ones worth

Chapter Summary

Tobias Budge and bread puddings. And hallucinations. :)

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long. You know, the other little project. The work for that should be done now though, so I'm hoping to get back into a rhythm here soon. Hope you like!

Fixing boat motors is relaxing. The dogs have settled around him, keeping him company. Will focuses on the motions only, his mind blissfully empty. He wonders for a split second how the blood-tomato-soup tasted. Another turn of the screwdriver, a clink of metal. Hopefully Alana had a good time. Supposedly the food is fantastic, after all. Will sighs, stretching out a bit more. The night had been short, thoughts churning in his head. He looks up when he hears the yipping, irritated when the dogs don't move, only looking at him. It sounds like some animal is wounded, outside. Will curses, looking at the clock. So early still. And the next vet is far off. He blinks, a thought entering his head. Ridiculous, really.
He dials regardless.

******

She waits outside, smile warm, illuminated by the early sun. It's cold and Will grins sheepishly at her, before greeting here, his voice apologetic.

„Thank you for coming by, Alana. I really appreciate it."

She smirks, indicating her car with a little wave of her hand.

„Anytime. Do you want me to get my bag now, or…"

She trails off and Will shakes his head, sighing.

„No, I want to go find it first. There is no guarantee after all."

He holds out his hand and they start off together, syncing their steps after the first few feet. Will pushes his hands into his pocket, thoughts weirdly sluggish, needing to know.

„I… hope I didn't ruin your morning. I know you were at Hannibal's last night. Must have been quite a feast."

Alana laughs, a free, dark laugh that warms Will from within.

„Oh, it was. You should come next time, the food and company is always marvelous. But I stayed away from the wine this time because I have grading to do this afternoon. I did that once with a hangover and… no thank you."

They chuckle together, leaving the shadow of the house, the light making Will scrunch his eyes shut instantly. There is a flare of pain behind his eyes, but it fades, ignored in any case. The enter the vast fields and Alana parts for a few feet, looking around, underbrush around them, the ground hard and frozen. Will pulls a face, his eyes scanning the ground.

„If it wasn't a coyote, the coyotes probably got it. Probably got it even if it was a coyote."

Alana shoots him a look, more interested in looking at him and his reaction than looking at the ground.

„You're not expecting to find it alive, are you?"

Will grimaces, voice resigned.

„We'll be lucky to find a paw."

Alana frowns at him, some incredulity in her voice.

„You invited me over to help you collect animal parts?"

Will shakes his head, reminding her a bit, adding the last bit on a stray thought.

„I invited you over on the off chance we find it alive. Hard to wrangle a wounded animal by myself. Did you think it was a date?"

She rebukes instantly, humor etched into her voice.

„Honestly, it never crossed my mind."

Will pulls a bit of a face, mulling over the response, needing to know.

„Why not?"

There is an aborted shrug, the answer too light.

„You just don't seem like you date."

Will smiles a bit, though it's on the painful side. He puts his right hand over his heart, indicating the pain playfully.

„Oh. Too broken to date."

Alana narrows her eyes, her tone echoing playfulness, softly rebuking.

„You're not broken."

Will grins, picking up the mood, deciding to ask.

„What's your excuse?"

Alana turns towards him a bit, before she scans the fields again, unfazed.

„For not dating? Why are you assuming I don't date?"

Will tilts his head, a bit unsure suddenly.

„Do you?"

Alana grins, easily accepting Will's verdict.

„No. Feels like something for somebody else. I'm sure I'll become that somebody some day but right now I think too much."

Will mulls over the answer for a moment, something reverberating in him.

„So. Are you going to try to think less or wait until it happens naturally?"

Alana's tone is light, easily transporting her honesty.

„I haven't thought about it."

Will looks at her and then frowns, looking at the ground around them.

Alana stops next to him, looking around as well, a bit puzzled.

„See something?"

Will's frown deepens, unease settling in his gut somehow.

„No, actually. I don't even see any tracks. Except the ones we made."

Will hesitates, looking around a bit more. He smiles a small, apologetic smile at Alana, feeling the seconds stretch between them. He clears his throat, indicating his house with a little wave.

„Well. Whatever it was appears to be gone now. Would you like some coffee?"

Alana hesitates, her own smile turning apologetic, evasive.

„I really do have to get to that grading that's looming over my head. Thank you though."

Will nods, more to himself and turns, walking back with her slowly, silent. Alana shoots him a look when they reach the house, fidgeting with the keys in her pocket.

„I'm sure there won't be any more attacks on animals, Will. Don't try to worry about it."

Will nods, his smile pressed, watching her get into her car and drive off, silently. He lets the dogs out and stays on the porch for a long time, watching them mill about, straining his ears. No further sounds reach him but he enjoys the peace and quite he can get, thoughts almost peaceful, skimming and flitting away again from the topic of relationships, testing their pull. Something easy would be nice. Someone who would understand. Accept and embrace even. Will exhales, refusing to let the vision of blue eyes turn into a darker shade, shying away from the implications. The impulse returns though and Will frowns, watching his breath fog in the cold air, silently mulling.

******

The kill is gruesome and beautiful, and Garret Jacob Hobbs applauds his play. What a beautiful sound. Will swallows the sound and the terror, settling deep in his stomach. The serenade plays in his ear, like a sirens call, promising everything he would like to ever know, if only he followed it to its source.

******

You visit Bedelia, needing to bounce some thoughts, her cold practicality and vicious intellect always helpful. As is the nourishment she provides. You should probably stroke her professional ego a bit more regularly. You put on a contrite mask, opening up the conversation with Franklyn, bound to evoke parallels.

„I worry I've made Franklyn feel powerless. His obsession with me is interfering with his progress. He wants to be my friend."

Bedelia latches on immediately, voice skillfully devoid of emotion.

„Are these the opportunities for friendship you spoke about?"

You don't directly confirm or deny, only giving your considerations.

„I'm considering referring him to another doctor."

She gives you a small smile, almost not there for this little statement.

„Referrals can be complicated. I referred you to another psychiatrist. You refused.“

You level her with a look that says it all, understated and warning.

„I’m more tenacious than Franklyn.“

There is an open hunger in her question, needing your answer.

„Why were you so tenacious?“

You put on an innocent expression, your teeth pulsing once. It’s true though and you let her feel it, sure of this at least. While she is useful definitely.

„I feel protective of you. You support me as my colleague and psychiatrist and as a human being,

I want to be supportive of you. “

She tilts her head, eyes cold sapphires, ripping your answer apart by changing the subject abprubtly.

„I’m not the only psychiatrist who’s ever been attacked by a patient.“

How nice of her to open that route. And how interesting that she would do so.

„I hesitated to even bring up the subject of an obsessive patient because of your experience.“

A minute narrowing of her eyes, riding on an illusion of safety. Playing the upper hand, a fact that is, in itself, very telling.

„Hannibal. I’m your psychiatrist, you’re not mine.“

The smile twitches on your lips before you can stop it. You look away, your tongue pressing into the gums behind your front teeth. You wonder what patient will attack. Or who will attack which patient. Your thoughts flit to him for a moment, wondering if he is part of the process that, for all intents and purposes, is already in motion. You tilt your head before you nod at her, getting up with a little incline of your head.

You leave her, unfed, this time.

Her wondering gaze bores into the back of your skull.

******

You leave the lights low tonight, wanting to see as much of him with your natural abilities as he permits, the room full of shadows. It makes him … itchy, wandering around, sufficiently relaxed, still, but aware of … something. He seems fine enough, the aroma of the encephalitis a sweet tang overlaying his natural scent, reminding you to repeat the conditioning again. Soon. Maybe not before whatever game is being played with Lucille and Bedelia has played out. It would not do to be too distracted. You make a mental note to check a bit on Miriam Lass instead, her conditioning only needing fine tuning by now.

You watch him walk, admiring the way he shifts, your mind running with the discussion on autopilot.

„Among the first musical instruments were flutes carved from human bone."

He is on point, not wavering.

„This murder was a performance."

Aren't they all? You phrase the thought differently, watching as he absorbs your meaning, easily, caressing the back of your chair. You wonder how his calloused hands would feel on your skin.

„Every life is a piece of music. Like music, we are finite events, unique arrangements. Sometimes harmonious, sometimes dissonant."

Something flits over his face, there and gone again. He steps away from the chair, derision in his tone, though it seems put on.

„Sometimes not worth hearing again."

Isn't it? You vaguely disagree, but then you cannot hear the serenade, not yet. You wonder if you could if he would be able to walk in the halls of your beginning.

„He's a poet and a psychopath."

„And a craftsman. He was shrinking and tanning the vocal chords."

He speaks as if he knows. You remember the oil stains on the carpet when you visited his house, the lures he builds. His fingers surely are nimble. A thought occurs to you, sparking flashes of memory. And taste. You lick your lips.

„Like turning iron wire into musical steel string. Was there olive oil?"

A mildly surprised look, coming to a stop after circling the room with you on the opposite side of the desk. It really is interesting that he keeps it between you.

„Yes."

You nod once, one more piece clicking into place. Adherence to protocol and old fashioned traditions would set well with the coven.

„Whatever sound he was trying to produce, it was an authentic one.“

He frowns for a moment, watching you intensely.

„Authentic?“

You feel his gaze like a warm blanket, the thought simultaneously ludicrous and extremely comforting. You press on, pushing forward, past the taste of Olives on your tongue.

„Olive oil hasn’t been used in the production of catgut for over a century. It was said to increase the life of the strings and create a sweeter, more melodic sound.“

His eyes take on a faraway look, flitting around the room before returning to you.

„I can hear what he was playing behind my eyes, when I close them.“

There is a breathlessness in your tone that you cannot hide, pushing with more force than you actually want to.

„What do you see behind closed eyes?“

His gaze flits away again and you have the distinct impression that he does not in fact tell you the whole truth.

„I see myself.“

Do you now. You narrow your eyes for a moment, prodding a bit more.

„You said the killer was performing. Who was he performing for?“

He lowers his gaze, shaking his head. Some part of him knows, you just feel it. He pulls a face, exasperation coloring his tone.

„I don’t know. Patron of the arts. Fellow musician. Or another killer.“

Of course. You are astounded at your own naiveté.

„It’s a serenade.“

He carries on, oblivious, circling the room into the opposite direction now, pressing on.

„This isn’t how he kills. How he kills, he doesn’t get caught.“

You cannot hide your own misgivings at realizing so late, not able to hide it at all.

„You believe he risked getting caught for a serenade?“

He turns away for a moment, somewhat exasperated, before he picks something up, the pieces clicking into place. You keep your gaze on the desk for now, aware that if you met his gaze he would be able to -see-.

„I believe he wants to show someone how well he plays.“

Oh yes he does. And more… You narrow your eyes, before returning to his. They are a deep almost black blue in the low light, watching you, watching your emotions. They must be very visible. Which is rather unwise, giving the way they churn in your guts. His voice is low, switching to an adjunct subject, so very astute.

„Are you not a patron of the arts at the Opera? I think I saw your name on a bronze plate somewhere.“

You force a smile onto your face, the genial expression feeling very put on.

„I am. I oftentimes attend the opera. Being a patron does come with perks.“

His head tilts slightly, his gaze flitting over your face. His fingers glide over your chair again, back and forth. You swallow, watching as he unconsciously echoes the motion before asking.

„Does these perks include access beyond official opening hours?“

Ah. Careful now, lest he suspects you too soon.

„It can. To my chagrin I must admit though that I am not that high up in the ranks. I do know who is though, if you’d like me to make some calls?“

He looks away for a long moment, his profile in stark contrast. The veins in his throat are pulsing and you can feel the answering pulse in your teeth. Time stretches for a long, long moment and then you rip yourself away, the taste of his aftershave heavy on your tongue, almost as if you had dragged it along the column of his throat. As you wished to do so fervently. He turns his head back and you watch the shadows play, watch how he locks his gaze with you. Something thrums between you and him and you watch his pupil dilate as if in slow motion, his face taking on a faraway look for a moment. Another head tilt, and then he blinks, the moment tearing apart, his answer a direct consequence.

„No. Thank you, I’m already taking up too much of your time.“

He turns away and you stay there, naked under his observation of your attraction, your thoughts churning. He steps away, his voice inflectionless.

„I need to go. Good night.“

You stay there by the desk, watching him leave, not trusting yourself, fury and hunger keeping your feet.

„Good night, Will.“

******

You go and find Lucille's … apprentice the next day. Chances are the FBI will be busy checking all the patrons today so you should still be safe.

You spar a bit. In another situation you might even have enjoyed this.

It's definitely him.

Now, what's to be done about that.

How about a dinner.

****

He is on time, aware, his dark gaze unflinching upon yours. His skin has a strong sheen to it, evidence of the recent gift Lucille has bestowed upon him. You hide the snarl in a smile as you bid him to come in, noting that he already observes the rules you all set for yourselves.

You lead him into the living room, watch as he observes the setting, eyes sparkling when he analyzes your copy of ‚Leda and the swan'.

„A perfect copy."

You smirk, uncorking the wine.

„What makes you think it is a copy?"

You indicate the table with a small nod, waiting until he is settled before rounding the table and bending to pour the wine.

„A late harvest Vidal from Linden." „Virginia? I thought it was French."

Almost amusing.

„The Virginia wine revolution is upon us. I apologize for being so blunt, Tobias, but I have to ask… did you kill that trombonist?"

There is a sparkle in his eyes. He is enjoying this, too.

„Do you really have to ask?" „No. Just changing the subject."

He watches you unwaveringly, very much alert.

„Franklyn gave you my message."

Dear Franklyn. You almost feel fond.

„The murder is being investigated by the FBI. They're going to find you."

A flash of fury in the dark eyes, challenging the world. Hybris. It will ensure his fall.

„Let them."

You wonder if Lucille knows about this streak of his personality. Or if it is something she particularly likes, even, given your own games and her tolerance of them.

„You want to be caught?"

„I want them to try. They may question me because I own a string shop. They'd send two men to conduct an interview, I'd kill them. Then I

would find Franklyn, kill him. Then I would disappear."

After haven proven his worth, then. You are suddenly very pissed off, deciding to change the game. You hide it in levity, inhaling the wine's odor.

„Don't kill Franklyn."

Real surprise. He does not see the snare.

„I've been looking forward to it. Actually, I was going to kill you."

How frank he is. A delight, really, to be able to speak freely. You let him see your amusement.

„Of course you were. I'm lean. Lean animals yield the toughest gut."

„I make my own string. Tell anyone who asks, it's imported from Italy."

A good choice.

„What stopped you from wanting to kill me? Or have you stopped?"

That sparkle is back in his eyes, watching you chew.

„I stopped after I followed you one night. Out of town. Out of state. To a lonely road. To a bus yard."

Oh. So he not only knows what you are but who you are playing as well. Is it possible that this is how Lucille may want to end it? He continues and you refocus with an effort on his words.

„Have you ever wanted to get caught? To see what would happen?"

Something tugs at you but you ignore it, forcing amusement into your tone.

„You're reckless, Tobias."

He picks up the amusement, echoing it.

„I'm not going to tell anyone what I saw you do and do well. So my recklessness doesn't concern you."

So he really is trying to play nice. Amusing indeed.

„It concerns me because you won't be drawing attention just to yourself."

You get up to get some more wine, ignoring how he tenses when you pass him. You turn with the decanter in hand, the heavy glass cool in your hands. He is thrumming life before you, instinctively knowing that things are coming to a head. Throwing in a last ditch effort to disarm you.

„I could use a friend. Someone who can understand me. Who thinks like I do, and can see the world and the people in it the way I do."

You almost feel sympathy. You long to reach for -him-, wanting to feel -him- so desperately for a moment you have to consciously unclench your fingers around the carafe. Being seen is truly an addictive taste and it is so close already. You decide to give Tobias the truth, utterly honest.

„I know exactly how you feel. But I don't want to be your friend."

He is irritated, so sure of his lure.

„Then why would you invite me to dinner? It wasn't just to restring your harpsichord."

You hide your smile, giving him more truth.

„I was going to kill you."

He glances at the food and you have to suppress a laugh, the amusement coloring your voice. „I didn't poison you, Tobias. I wouldn't do that to the food."

His stance shifts, preparing for fight and then the door bell rings, breaking it instantly. There is a narrowing of Tobias' eyes, utterly suspicious now.

„Expecting someone?"

No reason to hide the truth.

„No."

He stares at you and you concentrate, expanding, listening for the heartbeat. Oh.

Your heart beats, once, hard and you turn, unwilling to let Will wait long enough so he might

decide to leave again. You open the door and he rushes in, shaking his raincoat out uncaringly.

„I kissed Alana Bloom.“

They’re his first words and you blink, trying to make sense of the intense jealousy that’s rearing its ugly head. Jealous of another mortal. Ridiculous. You nod, settling for a short greeting, all you can trust yourself with just now, uttering the words as he pushes past you.

„Well, come in.“

He is disheveled, distraught, clothes unsorted. Weary, too. And yet he pushes on, wanting in, head lowered. You turn and steer him towards the kitchen, a step behind, your hand hovering over his lower back. He steps into your dining room, noting the half eaten meal immediately.

„Did you have a guest?“

You listen for Tobias’ retreating heartbeat for a minute, glad to not have to make an introduction.

„A colleague. You just missed him.“

You start to clear the plates, watch the way his eyes roam over the plates.

„Didn’t finish his dinner.“

He must be hungry. You realize you could even improve this evening still.

„An urgent call of some sort. Had to leave suddenly. This benefits you because I have dessert for two.“

You take the bread pudding out, starting to garnish it with whipped cream and the sauces. You try to keep your tone light, trying to not put too much weight on it. Not thinking about how it must have felt for her.

„Tell me, what was Alana’s reaction?“

He exhales, his tone a sing-song-flat nuance.

„She said she wouldn’t be good for me and I wouldn’t be good for her.“

Good. You don’t see any point to deny it, too.

„I don’t disagree.“

He looks at me, something wounded in his gaze and you feel the need to explain, lay it out for him.

„She would feel an obligation to her field of study to observe you. And you would resent her for it.“

His eyes close for an instant.

„I know.“

You need to know, you need. You busy yourself preparing and putting away while pushing the words out.

„Wondering then why you kissed her and felt compelled to drive an hour in the snow to tell me about it.“

There is an aborted laugh, and you can almost feel his deflection, tasting sour on your tongue.

„Wanted to kiss her since I met her.“

You do not let him deflect so easily, something more sitting under the words. You hide the sting with a smile.

„You waited a long time, which suggests you were kissing her for a reason in addition to wanting to.“

He tilts his head, hand over his heart. The subconscious gesture hurts, hiding and protecting his heart in equal measure. There is a rushing in your ears, almost drowning out his words.

„I heard an animal trapped in my chimney. I broke through the wall to get it out. Didn’t find anything inside. Alana showed up. She looked at me, maybe her face changed, I don’t know. She knew.“

Very interesting. Hallucinations are a step further to rough dreams. Is it a sign of your treatment or his sickness. You press further, wanting to hear it from his mouth, keeping your gaze on decorating the bread pudding.

„What did she know, Will?“

His voice is breaking on the words, so brave to put it actually out there.

„There wasn’t an animal in the chimney. It was only in my head.“

He comes closer, punctuating each iteration with a step towards you. Very good.

„I sleepwalk, I get headaches, I sleepwalk… feeling unstable.“

You look up, catch his gaze, almost desperately looking for reassurance now.

„That’s why you kissed her. A clutch for balance.“

Your gaze drops down for a moment, to the hint of a clavicle just visible through the gap of his blue shirt. Picking up the color of his eyes just nicely. He shakes his head, but not in denial, instinctively knowing you are not done. You are only too happy to fulfill his expectations.

„You said yourself what you do is not good for you.“

Wry derision, coloring his tone.

„Unfortunately, I’m good for it.“

Oh yes. And more. More than he knows. And maybe that can be used, even. Because he really is good, isn’t he. Trained as an officer, teaching at the FBI. Carrying a weapon, able to discern the darkness behind other people’s eyes. You need to hear what is behind his eyes.

„Are you still hearing this killer’s serenade behind your eyes?“

Something flits over his face and you want to feel the pull of his skin of that grin on your lips. His answer is weirdly poetic, a huff of laughter coloring his tone as he accepts the dessert.

„It’s our song.“

And it will be your masterpiece if you have anything to say on it. You might need to prep him a bit though. It would be the perfect introduction to the relevant circles. A proper introduction, too. You watch the shadows under his eyes for a moment, so dark, shifting when his eyes flit back and forth between yours, trying to discern the reason why you’re hesitating. You blink, laying the bait out, fidgeting a bit while you pretend to hesitate even more while putting the cloth away. For effect.

„I hesitate telling you this as it borders on a violation of doctor- patient confidentiality. I’ve never been in this position before. A patient told me today he suspects a friend of his may be involved with the murder at the symphony.“

His tone takes on a slightly exhausted tone, rubbing his eyes with his oily hands, nonetheless inquiring.

„What did he say about his friend?“

You have to hide your smile.

„He owns a music store in Baltimore, specializing in string instruments. Perhaps you should interview him.“

He nods to himself and you look at him for a moment, wondering how to proceed from here. He looks at the bread pudding like it had a life of its own and you take up your own, rounding the counter.

„Come. Let us eat in the study.“

You turn and lead the way, his soft steps falling into step behind you.

The study’s lights are low, and you put your plate on the little side table next to the sofa, stepping up to the fireplace. It only takes moments for the flames to catch, the fire roaring to

life beneath my fingers. When you turn he is hovering next to the other end of the sofa, watching you. You wonder what he sees, how much he sees.

„Please, Will, sit. I will get us a brandy.“

You turn towards the cabinet and retrieve the glasses, listening to the soft rustling of his clothes as he sits down on the sofa with a quiet exhale. You make sure that there is no trace left of the pill however small this time when you crumble and dissolve it in the brandy. You hold it out to him in a silent question, free will always such a delightful illusion. His voice is gravelly, accepting the glass.

„Thank you.“

You sit down next to him, the space between you too wide for your tastes but necessary. You take a sip of your brandy, watch as he does the same. The firelight plays on his face, light dancing on his features. You start eating, and he follows suit, the silence too easy somehow, pregnant with things unsaid but comfortable.

He breaks the silence, pupils already dilated, digging in now.

„It’s delicious.“

You smile at him, glad when you see the answering twitch.

„I’m glad. It would have been a true waste.“

He hums and you watch as he swallows, suddenly acutely aware of your own plan. You shift, crossing your legs, your body betraying you as it hasn’t done in centuries. He snorts and you are suddenly very much relieved that he will not remember this, not if anything goes according to plan.

„Is something amusing?“

Will drags the last bit of the bread pudding through the rest of the sauce, almost moaning when he puts it in his mouth. He swallows and puts the plate away, taking another sip of the brandy before he answers, his tone careful but direct, his by now widely dilated pupils just a bit unfocused.

„Why do you hide it so much?“

You tilt your head, your smile just a tad self-deprecating. You force yourself to open yourself to his gaze, letting him see, just a bit. Just enough to know you’re being honest.

„Not all knowledge is appreciated.“

Will raises his eyebrows, taking another sip of his brandy. His voice is slurred a bit when he answers.

„Oh, isn’t it?“

You stop breathing for just a moment. Your teeth drop and there is nothing you can do about it, arousal a heavy rush of undeniable elation. You turn away abruptly, pressing your lips together, trying to rein it in, pretending to put the plate away. A light thud draws your attention back to him and you watch as his head falls back, eyes slitted, mouth falling open just a bit. Just enough for a hint of teeth. The veins in his throat pulse and you lean near, not able to reject the impulse. Your lips ghost up the column of his throat, just hovering, your teeth throbbing with his pulse, mere millimeters away.

You bring your own wrist up by sheer willpower, dragging your mouth away to bite into your own flesh with a low shout. You press your forehead to the back of the couch for a long moment, fighting for a semblance of control. His breathing is shallow and your mind easily supplies other possibilities for fast, panting breaths like this, and you groan into your own skin, fighting the need back down, step by step.

Your other hand drops down to your crotch, adjusting yourself. That need will be addressed later. You gasp as you release your wrist, the wound sluggishly oozing blood onto the couch. You close your eyes for a long moment and then bend and lick at the wound until it closes. Not yet. You push up, getting the lights, the chamber music you put up this time more for your own nerves than anything else.

You rouse him by lightly clapping his cheeks, utterly selfishly enjoying the way his eyelids flutter open, just a bit, unfocused on you. You look down at him for a long moment and then get to work, the work on his mind steered by the lights. You whisper into his ear when he starts shaking with a very mild seizure, his mind rearranging itself around your words.

„It's beautiful."

You watch as his eyes search for you at your words, sweat dripping off his temple. You shush him, watching as he falls into almost-unconsciousness soon after, the drugs and the slight damage to his brain taking its toll. You turn the lights off, pondering before finally opting for a syringe this time. The prick of the needle is a delight and your blood fills the little syringe quickly, dark red and sluggish. You put the needle into his mouth, the tip pressing onto his tongue, but not pricking it. You watch the blood trickle into his mouth, disappearing into his throat and you clench your teeth, pushing the little button all the way down. His throat clicks as he swallows and then he moans, deeply and you cannot help it, you laugh, a tinge of despair coloring it.

He swallows again and then shifts, and you know the feeling, the delight, rushing through his veins now. Soon. His eyes flutter and then open, and you drop your hand with the syringe over the edge of the sofa, silently cursing at yourself. Of course your blood will heal him as well. He licks his lips, his eyebrows twitching and you shift, trying to compose yourself. Your voice is gruff though you try to put on a genial expression, not wanting to irritate him.

„I believe the brandy and your lack of sleep have taken its toll, Will. Would you like to stay in my guest room?"

He blinks and then pushes himself up with a groan, blinking owlishly at the embers of the fire, proof that some time has passed, indeed.

He shakes his head, silently, getting to his feet a bit unsteadily. He takes a deep breath, his voice a bit faraway, no doubt still feeling a bit high.

„No, I have to get back to the dogs.“

You get up as well, dropping the syringe and stepping forward to block his view.

„Ah yes, indeed. And please, let me know if something became of that string shop owner.“

Will blinks and you smile a small smile, broadening as you see how fast your blood sobers him up now, shifting everything into crystal clear clarity. He blinks again and you step forward, effectively triggering him into motion as well, both of you silent as you escort him outside.

He nods and then skips down the steps, more energy than before in his body. You smile and close the door, sighing before addressing the entry hall.

„This is becoming old, uncle.“

Robertas chuckles, stepping up from the shadows.

„But can it really, ever?“

He purses his lips in a sly grin, watching Hannibal for a moment.

„I didn’t think you would be able to resist, you know. As it is I am impressed… and concerned. Not letting yourself killed by Lucilles little… plaything is one thing, but using him for your own agenda may come across as a bit … on the nose.“

You pull a face, your mind supplying the images of the last time Lucille was displeased readily.

„He would find the shop in any case. I am just shortening the hunt.“

Robertas hums, nodding his head a bit, though only in acceptance of Hannibal’s argument, not concurrence. He steps up to Hannibal, his hand reaching up to straighten his lapels, tone low.

„What will you do when he dies, Hannibal?“

He won’t. You don’t say it, aware that at this point it may be wishful thinking.

„Then he will not have been worthy.“

You swallow, trying not to admit your fear. Knowing he can smell it anyway. Robertas reaches up and pulls your head down and he kisses your forehead, the gesture still the same after all the time. You inhale and then step back, your voice gruff when you indicate the study with your right hand.

„Would you like some brandy.“

Robertas clicks his tongue, weighing his head.

„I'd like some of your special reserve, please. If you don't mind."

You shake your head, mentally checking the labels and blood types already.

„Of course not."

At least you will be able to bear the sunlight fully fed after all.

******

You analyze your office the next day, preparing for any possible outcome. You move the stag statue away from the door, wanting something heavy to use as a weapon on the opposite side of the door. It's not as if you could use your teeth and the scalpel could rouse too much suspicion.

You decide to visit Bedelia to pass the time until your first appointment. She calls him worthy of your friendship in your eyes.

If she only knew.

It's amusing.

And devastating as an understatement.

******

You get to kill Franklyn after all. In a way you liked him after all. And you feel spite boiling in your stomach, the dread of Tobias here and Will not threatening to rob you of your mind. You fight, more like a human than anything else, careful to get the bruises and scratches the police will expect.

The stag statue does indeed come in handy. You play a few notes on the cembalo, trying to sort your thoughts.

You call Jack, your mind reaching out but there is only static and you want to scream, settling down behind your desk with an effort.

You wait.

******

Jack enters and you hold your breath, dread a knot of pain in your stomach. How easy it is to hope and how easy it is to destroy all of it in a bout of arrogance. And then he enters and your heart skips a beat, and you reach, still feeling static but it doesn't matter now, does it. You swallow and echo his smile as he comes up slowly, surveying the scene, standing next to your desk, so close. So alive. You cannot help it, you have to say it.

„I was worried you were dead."

He locks eyes with you, something passing between you.

And then Jack intervenes, deaf to the undertones.

„Tobias Budge kills two Baltimore Police Officers, nearly kills an FBI Special Agent, and after all that his first stop is your office."

A good thing poor Franklyn was here, indeed. You use him.

„He came to kill my patient."

Will inquires, softly, very sure still of himself, high on surviving and arguably winning this.

„Your patient. Is that who Tobias Budge was serenading?"

You wished you could tell him but you can't, so you settle for half truths.

„I don't know. Franklyn knew more than he was telling me. He told Mr. Budge he didn't have to kill anymore. Then he broke Franklyn's neck. Then he attacked me."

Jack follows the thought, his tone just uncomfortable enough.

„And you killed him."

There really is no need to deny anything.

„Yes."

Will frowns, the words coming haltingly.

„Could your patient've been involved with any of what Budge was doing?"

You click your tongue, making sure you look disappointed.

„I thought this was a simple matter of poor choice in friends."

Jack looks at you and then states his feelings succinctly, so very astute but thankfully unwilling to see.

„This doesn't feel simple."

Will comes closer and sits down on the edge of your desk and a thought flits through your mind, that you have literally killed others for doing this, but with him you only wished he would be closer. You keep your eyes averted, afraid he will see too much, here.

„I feel like I've dragged you into my world."

So much about keeping your eyes averted. You cannot help it, ending the answer with direct eye contact, wondering at the shade of his again, shifting, always shifting.

„I got here on my own. But I appreciate the company."

He smiles at you and you smile back, fidgeting and feeling naked under his gaze. It's almost a relief when the FBI wraps up and he is called by Jack to come with him to Quantico. Almost. You uncork the wine bottle with your teeth, gulping it down in one long swallow when they are gone eventually, settling on your chaise-longue.

It will be a long wait.

It's a text this time, Lucille's number flashing on the display. You read it out loud with a snarl, eyes flashing.

„Well played, this time, Hannibal. Enjoy him while you can."

You growl and throw the phone across the room, oddly satisfied when it explodes into hundreds of small pieces.

You call your patients and close your office for a few days. The whole thing makes for a good excuse after all.

And you really need to FEED.

When your teeth sink into human flesh a short time later you sigh, this itch finally scratched. You visit Aurora to scratch the other, just as delightful as expected. And her eyes are at least blue as well.

Legacies

Chapter Summary

Sometimes forging a family takes lies of omission. And meddling.

Chapter Notes

There is something that stuck with me when I rewatched the episode for this chapter. And yet... I don't really see the physical side of it. So I made up my own version. Would be interested in seeing what -you- guys think, here. I think you'll know when you get there.

And a belated sorry for the long wait, I dropped into a bit of a depression after the other projects demands -and- I was struggling with the viewpoints and tenses. Ultimately I decided to stay with the PoVs because there -was- reasoning behind it (yep^^^) and switching it (and I rewrote the first four parts for that) didn't feel right.

Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Your fingers thread through Aurora’s hair, like spun gold in the early morning hours. A wave of hair curls in her neck and you close your eyes, bending down, following the shape of it with your lips. She giggles and you chuckle, bending lower, dull teeth scratching in a deliberate tease. She turns and her eyes lock on yours, dark blue.

Water crashes down around you, the thundering of icebergs breaking apart almost deafening, ringing painfully in your ears.

You snap back, her eyes wide and alarmed at your expression. You blink and then excuse yourself, slipping into the en-suite bathroom with as much nonchalance as you can muster.

Conjoining.

Already.

You try to reach but the connection feels frayed, waves branding and then dispersing.

You pull with all your might while standing under the shower, cold water drumming on your skin. You grit your teeth when you don't feel the echo.

******

He's here.

You breathe in, deeply, a look at the clock showing that it is far beyond any of your normal hours, your mind racing.

You take your coat, deciding to claim nonchalance, opening your office door with your head lowered. The faked surprise tastes funny on your tongue, insincerity already uncomfortable.

„I wasn't expecting you."

He turns to you with wide eyes, something thrumming between you. You extend your hand, ushering him back into the office. He follows the prompt as if in a dream, nervous energy saturating the air. His voice shakes when he paces and you seat yourself, trying to provide a stable pole.

The smell of his illness is sweet, tickling.

Promising.

„I don't know how I got here."

You check, quickly, lest he might not be here alone. Ah, good.

„Your car is outside. So we know you drove. Safely it would seem."

His voice is shaking, limbs too tightly controlled, picking up the tremor. How beautifully frail he is, pacing the room, trying to flee his own terror. You fold your coat back up, turning to face him

„I was on a beach in Grafton, West Virginia… I blinked and then I was waking up in your waiting room. Except I wasn't asleep."

How very promising. Your meddling and the sickness make such a breathtaking combination. You frown, mask firmly in place.

„Grafton, West Virginia is three-and- a-half hours from here. You lost time."

He almost exclaims it, so sure of the simple truth, hands wild in the air for a moment.

„Something is wrong with me."

Oh yes. But you cannot let him cure it. Not yet. The pathways have not been rebuilt yet. You turn from your desk, keeping your voice firm.

„You're disassociating, Will. It's a desperate survival mechanism for a psyche that endures repeated abuse."

The shaking in his voice intensifies, his hand waving in your direction, eyes frantic for a moment.

„I'm not abused."

Another piece of the puzzle clicks. But you were? You hide the words behind your pressing fangs, changing tracks, the burning questions in the back of your mind not fitting for the here and now. You concentrate hard on the words to keep the red tunnel of rage you feel at bay.

„You have an empathy disorder. What you feel is overwhelming you."

„I know."

No stranger to suffering. You have that in common, once more. You vow silently to make whoever abused him suffer. Quite a lot, too. Creatively. You swallow, deflecting to stay on safe grounds.

„Yet you choose to ignore it. That is the abuse I'm referring to."

His gaze turns incredulous, shaking his head a bit, the light from outside framing him, like a halo.

„You want me to quit?"

You tilt your head a bit, not sure whether it would be good at this point. Best to return the question.

„Jack Crawford gave you a quit and you didn't chance to it. Why?"

There is pride and yet a smallness in his voice, simply stating, clinging to them, punctuating each word with his hand.

„I save lives."

Yes you do. You hide the smirk in the words, geniality coloring them.

„And that feels good."

He turns a bit away, somewhat exasperated, a weird kind of levity layered on the exhaustion, bitterness just below the surface, tugging at you.

„Generally speaking, yes."

Time to drive the point home. You open yourself, your words brutally honest.

„What about your life? I'm your friend, Will. I don't care about the lives you save. I care about your life. And your life is separating from reality."

He deflates, sinking down on the chaise-longue, his face in his hands. You can literally feel how difficult it is for him, the words coming haltingly.

„I've been sleepwalking. I'm experiencing hallucinations. Maybe I should get a brain scan."

Damnit. That may not happen. Not yet. You raise your voice, ignoring the almost startled expression this provokes, your heart skipping a beat.

„Will. Stop looking in the wrong corner for an answer to this. You were at a crime scene when you disassociated. Tell me about it."

The rushing of blood in your ears is so rare that you fade the discussion out on autopilot, guilt and shame and pride so easily to discern after all. You mentally remind yourself that you have the perfect neurologist at hand, your mind racing still around found puzzle pieces.

His eyes are huge when you warn him.

You would love to see a totem pole of the people that abused him just now.

He nods silently and then gets up and leaves without another word and you sink down into his spot on the chaise-longue, snarling into the void. The phone is cool in your hand, fingers carefully controlled as not to crush it. A click signals the connection, the voice so eerily familiar, unchanged after all this time.

„Justine."

You don't bother to give your name, citing his instead.
There will be a folder brought to you.

Soon.

****

It arrives the next evening, the messenger mute.

Quite a volume for a mere mortal. But then there is nothing ‚mere' about him, is there.

It's hidden between inconspicuous notes of a high school counselor, seemingly utterly innocent. Appointments to deal with his anxiety. When he was still a pre-teen. Way too many. It would not be anything remarkable if you weren't looking for something like this.

Time to check the memories of Dr. Margenya.

You take a cab to the airport, paying a staggering amount of money for a last minute flight south.

You will arrive in the evening.
Very good.

******

Shadows moving behind curtains, grown up children laughing, visiting their divorced dad, then leaving.

The upper bedroom's window is open, the roof still damp from the too steep flower watering spray earlier.

There is a gurgling scream, lodged in his throat as you pull the memories, nothing pleasant about this bite. Visions of a life, lived in the open, aspects hidden so deep as to be almost forgotten. You press down, the wrinkled flesh parting under your teeth.

Nothing physical.
The relief is overwhelming, as is your confusion.
Another tear into his flesh. Abuse can have many forms after all.

A vision of tears, running from stormy blue eyes.

He forced Will to dream up dark visions for his books, spinning him gold. He spits out blood beneath your fangs, having bitten on his tongue. He forced him to reveal dirty little secrets about his female class members. Threatened to have him taken away from his father.

You rip your teeth out, snarling in the dim room, utterly disgusted.

Heaving breaths and you let him drop to the ground, your measured steps silent.

He dies under your hand, the pages of his books and of journals of a time long gone, hidden in the floorboards, now cutting off little pieces of his skin with sharp paper cuts, dropping to the ground, ripped out, used.

You light the house on fire when you leave, leaving nothing of his legacy intact.

The sun rises as the plane takes off, the gazes of the other 1st class passengers inconsequential as they eye the dark spots on your suit wearily.

Some sixth sense informs them it would not be wise to ask.

You gotta love the evolution.

Your finger tips leave dents in the arm rests.

****

Will pushes the heels of his hands over his eyes, lights going off behind them. The phone rings, his hand going to pick it up automatically.

„Graham.“

„What the fuck did you do?“

Will frowns, eyes unseeing on the lecture hall.

„Who is this?“

„Don’t give me that. There was a page of a journal with your name rammed down my fathers throat!“

Will tilts his head, his expression thoroughly confused.

„What the hell are you talking about.“

Heavy breathing on the line, a minute pause.

„My … father was killed yesterday. Murdered. Police think it was some junkie, with some of the cash gone but I know better. All his journals are ripped apart and his notes for his new book, MY legacy, are gone as well. He always said that if he would die too soon it would be in a manner that befits your sick mind. He should have had you locked up!“

Ah. The vein in Will’s temple pulses as his jaw pushes forward, his underbite sharpening his jaw, words hissed.

„That pig deserved it then. Too bad I was far away, isn’t it.“

A pause on the line, then a click. Will turns the phone off, pressing it to his forehead for several minutes, trying to calm his racing heart. He exhales after, something like relief spreading, paired with a feeling of unreality and exhaustion. Will sinks down onto the desk, his head lowering. Static fills his senses for a long moment, thoughts sluggish. He drags his gaze from the floor to the little ship on his desk, tracing the outline for a moment. He really should get the boat ready and do a trip. Soon. He closes his eyes for a moment, listening to his students file in.

He reaches for the remote, the little click starting the lecture. It’s on autopilot.

When Alana pulls him out of the hallucination the drop into depression is literally inescapable. It settles in his stomach, a sick, heavy feeling, tears threatening. He tries to deflect, the embrace welcome but also threatening. He inhales her perfume, wishing for a different flavor.

****

Hannibal picks him up later, the expensive aftershave something Will is not quite ready to admit that he missed. He watches the world go by, silently, the expensive car swallowing all outside sound. The classical music is soothing, oh so soothing. Will blinks, the journey over too soon.

****

„Just because you killed my dad doesn't mean you get to be him."

Will flinches minutely and you clench your teeth, instant possessiveness flaring, need to protect him. Ridiculous really. A lash-back to his telling her that she is important. You briefly wonder at your own jealousy. She is testing only though, almost overstepping her bounds. Time to rein her in.

„You've been through a traumatic event. No one more traumatized than you, Abigail. But we're in it together. What you write you write about all of us."

„I don't need your permission."

She is spunk and fire, holding her ground. How very commendable. It's too bad the you have to restrict her impulses. One last appeal.

„And you don't need our approval. But I hope it would mean something."

She gets up, agitated, her voice breaking.

„I know what people think I did. They're wrong. Why can't I tell everybody they're wrong?"

You see how his eyes close for a moment, so sympathetic with her. You wonder if it is the mirroring only so that he cannot see. Does not want to see. It's something you can use. He emphasizes his words with his hands, voice grave.

You wonder if that's how his work feels to him.
Feeling accused the whole time.

„You have nothing to apologize for."

Au contraire. Though this is nothing you can discuss here. Maybe it is time for a warning.

„Yet. But if you open this door, Abigail, you won't control what comes through. Are you ready for that?"

You hold her gaze until she breaks the gaze but there is an angry frown on her forehead. Very well then. Lets force some hands. You narrow your hands, running through possible excuses when Will's phone rings, calling him off to an impromptu meeting at the FBI. He excuses himself, ringing for a cab and you smile at Abigail, not bothering with a mask.

„Until later, Abigail."

You leave her, following his scent outside, her shallow breathing sweet in your ear.

She will dig Nicholas Boyle out, hoping to empty your cards.

****

They call you in, trying to use you to dissuade Jack from his path. Will is agitated, so very protective of her.

Oh yes, you should try to use this.

******

You visit her once more, alone.

She really is brave, holding her ground, secure in the knowledge that you cannot just kill her.

It makes you wonder what else she sees.
You step up to her, driving the point home.

„I need to trust you Abigail. What if I can't?"

You smirk at her and leave, pretty pleased.

******

It's late. The stone pillars in your drawing need more definition still. The pencil makes a soothing, scratching sound. You inhale, the opening of the door bringing his scent. He does

not bother to knock, a weary but resolute quality about him. Calm. Ah. So he knows. And he came to you instead of going to Jack.

Beautiful. His voice carries sadness and relief.

„Abigail Hobbs killed Nick Boyle."

You look up at him, hiding nothing.

„Yes, I know."

He is not even surprised, the emphasis heavy on ‚why'.

„Tell me why you know."

Ah, but he knows that already, does he not. You give him the truth, plain and simply.

„I helped her dispose of the body."

He crosses over to the couch, his tone turning resentful. With a furious undertone. Now this is interesting.

„Evidently not well enough."

You already know but have to ask anyway, needing to hear it from him.

„Have you told Jack Crawford?"

„No."

Honest curiosity, obvious in your tone.

„Why not?"

And he gives you a deadpan answer, obvious as well and you have to hide your smirk, looking down at your drawing.

„I was hoping it wasn't true."

You push at the little scalpel next to your left hand, reminiscing for a moment how you would have handled this situation in another time. With another person. Probably.

„Now you know the truth."

There is a laugh in his voice, his instincts already so on point. The truth, the truth, and all its consequences.

„Do I?"

You hurry to reassure him, not wanting him to waver.

„Everything you know about that night is true. Except the end. Nicholas Boyle attacked us. Abigail's only crime was to defend herself and I lied about it."

„Why?"

Oh please. He turns away, not wanting the truth.

„You know why. Jack Crawford would hang her for what her father's done. The world would burn Abigail in his place. That would be the story. That would be what Freddie Lounds writes."

He turns back for a moment, inclining his head. Easy, now.

"Abigail is no more a killer than you are for shooting her father or I am for the death of Tobias Budge."

There is an ounce of defiance in his voice, a last ditch at propriety.

„It's not our place to decide."

Ahhh, society's rules. You step up to him slowly, keeping your voice imploring, fraught with desperate intimacy, agitated.

„If not ours, then whose? Who knows Abigail better than you and I? Or the burden she bears?"

You pause, giving space for the words to unfold. You cannot help but lean closer.

„We are her fathers now. We have to serve her better than Garret Jacob Hobbs."

Another drop of your voice. His face is in stark relief against the window, fine-cut profile against gray-red. The vein in his throat pulses, pale blue under pale skin. You want to press your fingers into it, feel the pulse, make him gasp. You tear your gaze away, turning away slightly, pushing your hands into your pocket, just to be safe. You swallow, turning the feeling into visible consternation.

„If you go to Jack, then you murder Abigail's future. If she is ever to have the life she deserves, then we have to tell no one."

No visible reaction, only a slow blink. You fidget a bit, portraying profound discomfort.

„Do I need to call my lawyer?"

He breaks out of his almost stupor, raising his gaze until he can hold yours. It's deep and yet clear, full of longing and desperation. He shakes his head, once, a deliberate, slow shake that never takes his gaze off you. It makes your skin prickle.
You step up, your voice imploring.

„We can tell no one."

Another step close and he turns to the window again, looking out unseeing. You cannot resist, raising your left hand, settling on his shoulder. You squeeze just lightly, enjoying the firm muscles beneath the clothes.

„What we're doing here is the right thing, Will. For Abigail. In time, this will be the only story any of us cares to tell."

You drag your hand away again, watching him for a long moment before you turn away on purpose. Long strides bring you to your cabinet and you hesitate for a moment before you open it, the pills ready at the back. You pour some white wine this time, carrying it over to him, still silent in front of the window.

Your hands touch as he takes the glass, taking a deep swallow, utterly uncaring for the taste. You probably should be annoyed but you are way too relieved. And enjoy watching him swallow way too much. He blinks and shoots you a look and you realize you may have shown too much but he just blinks again and turns away with a sigh, sinking into his chair. The music changes, a soft harpsichord theme next. Will raises his eyebrows, eyes unseeing on the books above, his voice dreamlike.

„If you are going to be Abigail's father, will you teach her the harpsichord?"

You frown in surprise, clicking your tongue. You think on her slim hands, long fingers, seemingly nimble enough. You sit down across from him, taking a sip of your own wine.

„A fine idea. You already wanted to gift her fishing gear. Will you take her to fish? Build your own legacy?"

He purses his lips, swirling the wine around in his glass before taking another swallow.

„Might. Guess we'll share wine more often…"

You tilt your head, watching him closely.

„Would that be a bad thing?"

He locks gazes with you and you notice his pupils are considerably blown already, courtesy of the drugs rushing through his body.
It makes him utterly honest, eyes narrowing.

„I'm not sure…"

He hums and you wait, sensing the words to come.

„You might need to cook more dinners."

You chuckle, lightly toasting him with your glass.

„I believe I can do that."

You hesitate, an idea forming.

„We should invite Miss Lounds to dine with us.“

He cackles, downing the rest of the wine, his head dropping back.

„And, pray tell, to what end should we invite Miss Lounds.“

You lean back, watching the pale column of his throat.

„In her own way I believe she cares for Abigail. She recognizes something of herself in her and that binds her to Abigail. We should… use her.“

Will hums, his head swaying right and left a bit, eyes slowly closing. His voice is dreamlike, words considerably spaced already, the grip of his fingers on the glass loosening.

„Use her… you do that a lot… don't you.“

You get up, placing your own glass on the little side table, just in time to catch his as it drops from his limp hands. You place it next to yours and then lean over him, looking at his eyes for a moment. He is almost unconscious, eyes trying to focus on you, whispering, utterly without fear.

„You play us like cards…“

His eyes close and you smirk, proud of him and his ability to see you, dangerous as it may be and yet safe in the knowledge that he will forget this last part come morning, which will find him safe and sound at home, in his bed.

It means no sleep for you and two trips to Wolf Trap by car and careful trips back but then you might be able to connect this with a little side trip to Miriam Lass.

It's all falling into place so neatly.

******

„Everybody decides their our own versions of the truth. I'm here because I want to tell Abigail's version of the truth.“

You take a deep breath, inhaling the aroma of the red wine, Will, on your right, shooting dark daggers across the table. He is holding together by sheer fury and derision only, the suggestion you enforced so deeply having driven him to this dinner despite all his reservations.

You have got to give it to Miss Lounds, her spunk something admirable. You watch as she takes a bite of the cucumber, silently happy that you liked this particular bone china plate set so much. You have to bite down on your tongue to hide your smile.

Will drops out of the conversation after a few more sharp comments, focussing on the food only. It is not unpleasant and yet strange, this little dysfunctional war council. Abigail's eyes are huge, aware that Will is aware. She flees to the kitchen when dessert is done and Will looks after her, eyes dark and sad. You look at Miss Lounds until she gets the suggestion and gets up, her voice suffused with dark delight and a wide smile.

„Well, this has been a delightful evening. We should do this more often."

Will's only answer is a deep swallow of wine, eyes still fixed straight ahead, unseeing. You sigh through your nose and get up, extending your arm into the general direction of the front door.

„Miss Lounds. Thank you for coming. Let me show you out."

She nods and you fall into step behind her, some sixth sense making her pick up speed towards the door. She takes her coat and pulls it open, turning to you with a wide, fake smile, her eyes watchful.

„I look forward dining with you again, Dr. Lecter. There will be much to discuss after all. Breaking Abigail out of her father's legacy will not be easy."

You incline your head a fraction, your eyes locking with hers.

„Please be sure to stay within… Abigail's best interests, Miss Lounds."

Her smile breaks a bit, brittle, nodding too fast, curls falling into her face, understanding you just fine. She leaves, hurried steps down the court way and you smirk, turning towards your unanticipated and rather impromptu little family.

You smile at the thought, following their heartbeats back inside. From the way the bottle clinks against Will's glass you think he might need to stay in your guest room tonight.

Good.

He doesn't look at you when you reenter the dining room and so you pass him, leaving him to glower and wallow in gloom, taking care of Abigail more important just now.

She is the key to him after all.

For a while at least.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think?
:)

Skipping ahead

Chapter Summary

Of ladders and missing time and friends compared to pig.

You change the sheets in the guest room yourself the next morning. Normally, so mundane tasks would be done by the house service you have coming over when you leave for your office. Today though, you allow yourself to bring the cloth to your face, breathing in deeply.

There's oil and dogs and sweat and shampoo and the slightly more upgraded aftershave he wore yesterday evening. And then there's -it-. Sharpened to a sickly sweet odor, hidden in the salt of his nightmares. Your tongue darts out before you can stop yourself, pressing against the fabric. An explosion of taste, tart and sweets and addictive. A hint of blood, where he apparently bit his tongue during the night, the little drop diluted by spit.

The cloth tears under your teeth just as your hand stills, bliss available for a moment in time.

******

„I feel my nerves clicking like roller coaster cogs pulling up to the inevitable long plunge."

Will watches Hannibal watch him, unwavering, gazes locked. So close, too and Will wonders if it is really closer than he remembers, fighting with himself to look for scratch marks of the chairs on the floor. Hannibal's voice is quick, calming to his frayed nerves.

„Quick sounds. Quickly ended."

Will narrows his eyes for a moment, trying to pour his emotions into the statement, emphasizing the non-joke with a smile, his hands lifting to indicate the expression, looking away to brace for the last statement.

„Abigail ended Nicholas Boyle like a burst balloon. She took a life."

Hannibal tilts his head and Will cannot help but compare it to some reptile, eyes glittering on his. Judging.

„You've taken a life."

Will cannot help the rushed exhale, incredulity coloring his tone.

„Yeah, yeah, so have you.“

Hannibal shifts a bit, his eyes imploring. Will can feel him reaching, the tickling inside of his brain intensifying.

„You’re grieving, Will. Not for the life you have taken, but for the life that was taken from you. If Abigail could have started over, left the horror of her father behind, so could’ve you. You could untangle yourself from the madness and the murder, clear your mind.“

Will frowns and then raises his eyebrows, trying to work past the unease.

„We lied for her.“

Hannibal presses his lips together.

„We both know the unreality of taking a life, of people who die when we have no other choice.“

He leans forward, his eyes very dark and Will feels pinned, like a butterfly under that stare.

„We know in those moments they’re not flesh, but light and air and color.“

Will smiles, painfully, swallowing to force the bile down.

„Isn’t that what it is to be alive.“

Hannibal’s eyes narrow and he counters immediately, his voice softly carrying a note of rebuke.

„Do you feel alive, Will?“

Will looks away, unable to keep the gaze. His stomach turns, pressure settling deep in his bowels, sour with truth.

„I feel like I’m fading.“

Hannibal latches on immediately again and Will turns his head away, afraid of what he might see.

„Have you experienced any further loss of time… or hallucinations.“

Don’t you know? Will does not say it, nodding almost mutely, the word that he wants to speak stuck in his throat. Hannibal nods, getting up and walking over to his desk. He retrieves one of his little notebooks, his fingers caressing the spine of it for a moment before he hands it to Will. Sensual, always.

„I’d like you to draw a clock face. Numbered. Large hand indicating the hour, small hand the minute.“

Will frowns for just a moment, his mind running through his as more mediocre perceived drawing abilities. Especially compared to Hannibal's skill.

„Why?"

He takes it nonetheless, not even wanting to wait, inspecting the little book perfunctory. Creamy white pages, heavy. Leather bound. He opens it up, thumbing through empty pages. Hannibal's voice is almost light, instructing, destroying all doubt.

„An exercise. Nothing more. I want you to remember a present moment. Think of the time. Think of where you are. Think of who you are."

Will pushes his jaw forward, teeth scraping for just a moment, his eyes lowered. He can feel the weight of Hannibal's gaze, blanketing him, grounding in this moment. He blinks, the weight of the gaze not unwelcome. The words come automatically, framing the actions of drawing the clock.

„It's 7:16 PM. I'm in Baltimore, Maryland. My name is Will Graham."

Will hands it back, leaning forward in his chair while Hannibal scoots a little bit closer. Will sinks back, relieved somehow to put some more space between them, the distance between them seemingly charged with inverted electricity, with… negative friction. It pulls at him, tearing at his nerves some more. Hannibal smirks an almost smile, sending shivers of -something- down Will's spine when he takes it.

„A simple reminder. A handle to reality for you to hold onto."

Hannibal looks at Will and Will clenches his hands on the armchair, locking gazes with him for a long moment.

„I cannot take that handle with me though, can I."

Hannibal blinks, tilting his head.

„No. No you cannot."

Another blink and Will consciously echoes it, seeing the pull of a smirk in Hannibal's eyes at that. Hannibal exhales suddenly, changing the subject abruptly, just as the clock chimes eight.

„Did you enjoy the stay at my house, Will?"

Will inhales, his knuckles white, uncomfortably aware of -something-.

„I… did I just lose time?"

A very slow blink from Hannibal and then a slow shake of his head, his eyes never leaving Will's. Despair lodges itself in Will's gut, the world wavering with tears he will not allow himself to shed. Not here, not now.

„I… feel like we have talked about something but I may have forgotten what exactly."

A slow smile breaks on Hannibal's face and Will waits, shivering, feeling brittle.

„The clock is early, Will. Let me get you a drink."

Hannibal gets up and walks over to the cabinet but Will shakes his head, turning his gaze to the watch on his left wrist. The skin under it itches and he pulls at it before reading it, the time 7:35pm.

„No. No drink, thank you Dr. Lecter. I… I'm going to leave early today."

Hannibal pauses, his fingers tapping the cork of the bottle he just opened before turning back with a disappointed expression on his face.

„Of course, Will. Though I do admit that I will miss our more… relaxed conversations."

Will shakes his head, his words beyond sardonic.

„I don't think I could pull off a relaxed conversation with or without wine now, Dr. Lecter."

Hannibal nods and then comes back with measured steps, a bit too fast. Will frowns up at him and Hannibal literally stops, almost hovering a foot away. Will swallows and pushes himself up, the motion bringing him into close proximity to Hannibal. Something… passes between them and Will locks his gaze firmly on the cabinet on the other side of the room, the air between them charged suddenly, his heart thundering in his ears. No. Not here, not now, not… goddammit. Will gasps and pulls left and away, the separation by distance almost painful, raw. Another step and then it gets easier, suddenly, as if whatever pull Hannibal had exuded had ceased to exist. Will hurls a greeting over his shoulder, aware that it might be rude, the metal of the doorknob cold.

And reassuring.

****

Stupid, stupid, stupid, stupid.

You hurl his chair through your office, snarling when it hits the wall next to the door, falling onto the little horse statue. The tail breaks off with a little crack, the chair and the tail coming to rest in a seemingly deaf quiet after a moment, only broken by your heavy breathing.

Maybe you can glue it back on.
But it will never be whole again, will it.

You refuse to see the analogy.

You visit her instead, taking her high and then tasting the burst of pleasure, unsatisfying on your own tongue.

You leave, your stomach full, your soul aching.

****

He returns to you, driven by fear, despite everything. You should be concerned, maybe, but all you are is happy, watching him here, with you. You make sure to paste the concern on your features though, not wanting to spook him further. He paces, agitated, the smell of it alluring. You restrain yourself, hands folded in your lap, leaning back on your desk. His words are brittle, tinged with beyond-dark amusement and horror.

„I still have the coppery smell of blood on my hands. I can't remember seeing her dead body before I saw myself killing her."

You lick your lips before you can help it, wanting. Only one night since your feeding and yet, yet…

„Those memories sank out of sight, yet you're aware of their absence."

Will turns to you, his gaze flitting around but his hands pointing at you, unconsciously. You have to admire that mind. Especially in that body.

„There's a grandiosity in the violence I imagined that feels more real than what I know is true."

Awareness that something might not be as it should be. You silently wonder how deep that awareness might go.

„What do you know to be true?"

The answer is immediate, his eyes flashing. He turns away from you again, pacing. The vein in his throat pulses and shines under his skin in the same hue as his shirt is in under the vest.

„I know I didn't kill her. Couldn't have. But I remember cutting into her. I remember watching her die."

How interesting. You bite down on the words of ‚how does that make you feel', not wishing to raise his … sass up, his own bite, so easily shown with words. Instead you focus on the role you play, trying to instill some sense.

„You must overcome these delusions that are disguising your reality. What savage delusions does this killer have?"

Will shakes his head, a faraway look crossing his features, forlorn in the vastness of his mind for a moment. His hand traces the rungs of the ladder for a moment, gliding over the well polished wood before he leans back against it, his voice low.

„It wasn’t savage. It was lonely… desperate… sad.I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. I looked through me, past me. Like I was a stranger.“

‚I‘… hmm. Your thoughts flit away for a moment, envisioning the possibilities of him envisioning you - when he will finally see. You get up, slowly, pushing some of your force into the movement and advance on him, a thrill running through you when he yields, leaning back from you for just an instant before falling forward again, unconsciously. Wanting to be close again. Ah, how sweet it would be to close the final gap and press him into the rungs, press the breath from his lungs and take it into yourself. How his hands would pull and shove, maybe, limbs shaking, probably. How his mouth would fit onto yours. How his skin would yield under your teeth, resistance first and then a hot spray of ecstasy, echoed back into his body by the opiates in your spit. How you would hold him up, swallowing his cries, his body engulfing you. Your teeth throb but you force it down, trying to catch his eyes, willing your physical reactions away.

„You have to honestly confront your limitations with what you do and how it affects you.“

He sighs and his breath travels over your skin, moist warmth, followed by brittle words, shaking his head.

„If by limitations you mean the difference between sanity and insanity… I don’t accept that.“

Only one foot between you. Your left hand curls into a fist, hidden from view. You force the words out, trying to keep from reaching out.

„What do you accept?“

His eyes flash, the words rushed now, mind in overdrive, trying to come up with another solution.

„I know what kind of crazy I am and this is not that kind of crazy. This could be seizures. This could be a tumor. A blood clot.“

So it has come to it then. A good thing you are prepared. So much blue in his gaze.

„I can recommend a neurologist. But if it isn’t physiological, then you have to accept what you’re struggling with is mental illness.“

He nods jerkily after a moment and you turn away, glad to be able to tear your gaze away suddenly. You cross over and pick up your address book, pretending to look for the number. His question rings out, catching you by surprise.

„Will you accompany me?“

You turn, book in hand, an honest smile on your lips.

„If you wish. My expertise could help to narrow down the symptoms.“

Will nods jerkily again and you feel triumphant, pretending to hesitate.

„Would you be amendable to me making the appointment then, Will? I would need to clear it with my own schedule.“

„Of course.“

You nod and take your phone, calling the office of Dr. Sutcliffe. It rings and you go through the motions of making a private appointment, the necessary timeframe clear in your mind. He pushes himself off the ladder as you speak, wandering around the room, eyes everywhere and nowhere. You fix the date and then end the call, watching him move around the room. His voice sounds faraway, lost somehow, as if in trance.

„You have lived lives before this one. What has brought you here?“

You frown, a bit irritated, stepping up to him.

„Will?“

He snaps out of it, his head turning towards you, gaze apologetic.

„I’m sorry. To echo your words, I cannot turn mine off just as you cannot turn yours off.“

You work your jaw for a moment, watching his profile as he looks down at the little horse statue. You follow his gaze, the fracture line visible despite your best abilities.

„I dropped a bottle the other day, it hit the tail of the little statue, sadly. Time will tell whether the tail will stay on or if I will have to part with it.“

He hums, head tilting a bit.

„It looks old.“

You smile, fondly, remembering the time and palace you took it from.

„It is.“

Will inhales, deeply, turning away again, his hand coming up to rub at his temple. He pulls out the little bottle of aspirin and swallows some dry, eyes closing in exhausted defeat.

„When’s the appointment?“

You click your tongue, allowing something businesslike entering your tone.

„Tomorrow afternoon at 3pm. Dr. Sutcliffe is an old friend. He squeezed us in.“

„Good friend?“

The question catches you off guard, your mind supplying this life’s iteration of education and practice, a mere blink ago in the grand scheme of things. Visions of limbs entangling and biting into femoral arteries, memories deleted again by hypnosis, of carefully navigating the

hospital life, using him to excuse you if need be. Delivering others to your bed and his for fun and other's expectations.

„In a way."

He looks at you and you want to assure him. Tell him that it wasn't like that, that what you share is different, but he wouldn't understand. Not yet. You hold his gaze until he looks away, sighing, nodding to himself.

„Alright. I'll be here by 2:30pm then and pick you up."

You watch as he leaves, your words reaching him as he opens the door.

„It will be my pleasure."

******

Will is decidedly reserved the next day, maybe because of the situation of course but maybe… You entertain yourself with thoughts about jealousy on the drive to the medical center, playing through the more… colorful repercussions to ignore the music coming from the radio.

He puts on his glasses before he gets out and you smirk to yourself, the way to distance him from the world apparently never necessary when he is with you after all. Your way up is silent, bar the few words with the receptionist and Will follows you in, mute.

Donald has aged, but so have you, careful non-regeneration in fitting intervals. He insinuates and you answer in kind, your heart skipping a beat when you hear Will gnash his teeth, the sound too low for human ears. He answers the questions easily, honestly, and you know where this is going, silently mourning the need to stay outside and miss the view.

But then it gives other opportunities, doesn't it.

You call on old times and his vanity, his eyes wide when he sees the clock.

To make sure the world may know his name.

Poor soul, really.

Useful though.

You convince him while you analyze the results, the computer model confirming what you smelled. It is a wonder really how Will can still function. Your phone rings and you frown, looking down at the number before picking up. Jack.

You keep the conversation short, not wanting to relay too much information in present company. You hesitate, before saying goodbye, imprinting Donald with a set of todos for good measure. You step up to the locker rooms, hearing the rustling inside, cloth on cloth.

„Will, I have an urgent appointment that's come up."

The rustling stops and the door opens, his eyes huge on yours. He is half dressed and you try and fail not to look, his naked feet calling to you for some reason. Your voice drops, the words coming by themselves.

„Will you be alright?"

Will nods, jerkily and then gives you a brittle smile. He reaches for his glasses, pushing them on slowly.

„Sure."

You nod and then turn, feeling torn between triumph and despair, angry at yourself for giving in to Jack's request. The door clicks behind you and you leave, something tugging at you to stay.

Well.

You just have to be extra convincing with Jack then, won't you.

****

A shudder across your consciousness, in the middle of the night. Frantic footsteps, and confusion, there for just an instant. The sense of cold and trees and dead skin.

You smile to yourself and turn over, your fingers gliding over blue satin, the closest to what his skin might feel like after turning as you can get.

****

He doesn't return before his next appointment and you don't really expect him to, the disappointment of the supposedly inconclusive medical check keeping him away.

Fear is a powerful motivator.

The more to admire that he actually shows up on your door, even humoring you again by drawing the clock for you. And seating himself in your chair no less, inhabiting your space as

if it were his. Promising, indeed. And something that will be a nice imprint later, when he leaves, his scent on your possessions.

„It's 7-oh-5 PM. I'm in Baltimore, Maryland. My name is Will Graham."

You let him know that you actually appreciate his acquiescence, truth coloring your tone when you take the little notebook back.

„Thank you for humoring me."

He is dressed in comfortable clothes today, a soft sweater that brings his neck into sharp focus. You keep your eyes down, his words colored by exhaustion.

„I feel like I'm seeing a ghost."

Delving into the supernatural. If only he knew. There is a sudden, sharp pang in your guts, wanting him to know.

„Regarding this killer or yourself?"

An aborted shrug, just truth pouring out.

„Both."

You hurry to assure him, no need to make this even more difficult after all.

„She's real. You know she's real. There is evidence. When you saw her, your sanity did not leave you."

„Time did."

You shoot him a look, his gaze dark but open.

„You lost time again?"

He nods once, not able or not wanting to verbalize. Another step on the journey reached then, the little seizures coming more regularly. You wonder if you could convince him to have another glass of wine later to continue with your more personal therapy.

„I spoke to Dr. Sutcliffe. We briefly discussed the particulars of your visit. Would you like to discuss them with me?"

His tone is dry, a note of defeat in them.

„There are no particulars. He didn't find anything wrong."

You busy yourself with your pencils and other notebooks, wryly noting that you are simply not used on being on this side of the desk, not able to sit down. Maybe a more direct approach would be applicable.

„Then we keep looking for answers. Perhaps you would permit me to run some tests of my own?“

He rubs his hand along his jaw, stubble rasping, a note of sly distrust in it.

„You wouldn’t publish anything about me, would you, Dr. Lecter?“

You almost smile a that, him being a very worthy subject after all, but, if you have your way, better to be off anybodies radar in the future, fading into the realm of whispers and rumors, just as yourself or, better, this incarnation will take your place. Something to be spoken of in hushed tones, behind hands, eyes scanning the world around them, lest they wake the beasts that walk in their midst.

You keep your gaze down, waving his concerns off with a deliberate show of nonchalance, giving him what he expects.

„If there were ever anything that might be of therapeutic value to others, I’d abstract it in a form that’d be totally unrecognizable.“

His answer is dry, the words truer than he knows them to be. He pulls at his lower lip, the motion reflecting something you would have interpreted as flirting in another situation.

„Just do me a favor and publish it posthumously.“

You keep your eyes down to hide your mirth, wondering if he thinks you have an obsessive-compulsive disorder with the way you keep righting your pencils.

„After your death or mine?“

He looks away, breaking the mood, withdrawing as it were. Just a bit. His voice is dark, full of foreshadowing.

„Which ever comes first.“

It will not come for him if you can help it. Or, better, it will come for you both in a very certain way. When he is ready. You swallow, changing the subject.

„Have you considered Cotard’s syndrome? It’s a rare delusional disorder in which a person believes he or she is dead.“

He looks at you, somewhat incredulous, the emotion clear in his voice.

„You talking about the killer or me?“

Ahh, dear Will, you will not think you have Cotard’s syndrome. You let your amusement color your tone, lest he dwells too long on this.

„The killer, of course.“

He echoes the ‚of course', very quietly and you smile to yourself, just a small smile, his sass towards you something you very much enjoy. No fear. Not of you. You wonder how it will be when he begins to see. He leans forward, elbows on your desk, gesticulating with his hands, his eyes closing, moving behind closed lids. Remembering. Very interesting.

„She couldn't see the victim's face. Or she was trying to uncover it."

You step over to the other side of the desk again, picking up the little notebook with his clock face in it again. Maybe you should find something else to do with your hands but you cannot seem to help it, the impulse to touch him so present it itches.

„The inability to identify others is associated with Cotard's syndrome. It's a misfiring in the areas of the brain which recognize faces, and also in the amygdala, which adds emotion to those recognitions. Even those closest to her could seem like imposters."

He nods to himself, following your train of thought easily.

„She reached out for help, someone she loved, someone she trusted. She felt betrayed, became violent."

You lean down, pressing your hands onto the edge of the desk, deciding to use this for your own agenda. You lick your lips and lock gazes with him, the lights insufficient to show the blue, your tone imploring.

„She can't trust anything or anyone she once knew to be trustworthy. Her mental illness won't let her."

He nods lightly, looking away, seemingly shrinking into himself. You push yourself up, tapping the desk once.

„Maybe a brandy today, to help with this day."

You don't wait for his acquiescence, none forthcoming from him when you step up to the cabinet. For a split second you doubt yourself but then you crumble the little pill into his drink, the shiver that spreads down your back as your fingers brush when he takes it divine.

He looks like a painting when his head lolls back against the chairs back after a few sips, eyes closing in exhausted defeat, helped along by inescapable warmth, spreading everywhere. You look at him for a long time, watching the rise and fall of his chest.

„If you let his mind burn like this for much longer, there will be nothing left to change, Hannibal."

You smile to yourself, quite sourly and then turn, your answer terse, keeping your face carefully blank.

„Uncle."

Robertas sighs, sitting down in -his- chair, looking at you for a long moment before speaking again.

„He trusts you, Hannibal. And he already sees beyond the mortal world.“

You incline your head, your voice hard.

„He does not yet see the beauty in darkness. His sickness is a gift, allowing me to rewrite some of his pathways.“

Robertas clicks his tongue, eyes flitting to Will and back to you.

„What if he finds out that you tempered with him. Would that not hurt your agenda.“

You frown, tilting your head.

„He won’t.“

Robertas snorts.

„If he is half the mortal miracle you think he is, he will, Hannibal. What then? Or, what if he finds out who has played him so perfectly in respects to the actual murders?“

You sigh through your nose, thoroughly annoyed with Robertas’ continued meddling in your affairs. As if you were not prepping every possible route.

„If you are insinuating I do not have control over him I assure you, I will find a way to protect the coven and myself should the need arise.“

Robertas waves a hand, shaking his head.

„Ah, don’t be silly, Hannibal. You know just as I do that the -coven- will protect itself, after all we have protégés in every official department. No.“

Robertas gets up again, stepping up to you, brushing some non existing lint off your lapels.

„No, what I -mean- Hannibal, is: he envisions everything dark, brings it to life. What if you rewire him and he finds out and decides to set out for revenge. Would he not be an adequate enemy? Resourceful and crafty, skilled and vicious?“

You frown, the truth heavy in your gut somehow.

„He would not kill me.“

Robertas raises his eyebrows, snorting.

„Oh, would he not?“

You glower at him, your answer curt.

„No, he would not. Not really. Maybe he would try.“

Robertas narrows his eyes, tilting his head.

„Why not?“

You snarl at him, eyes flashing, your teeth pulsing though you have the good sense to keep them retracted.

„Because, Uncle, he is just like me. We are identically different. And we are conjoining. It has already started.“

This time the huff is without artificial put on emotions, the words coming right away.

„What? Already?“

You grin at him, grimly and then you incline your head, lowering your voice to a whisper.

„Good night, Uncle. I have work to do.“

Robertas' eyes flit to Will behind you and then back to yours, before turning away silently, not using his speed for once. He hesitates when he reaches the door, looking back at you over his shoulder.

„I will need to report this development to the coven. They need to know. There might be talk.“

You grind your teeth, turning away deliberately.
The door closes and you close your hand on your letter opener until it hurts, blood flowing sluggishly for a moment, the pain cleansing, taking the fury with it.

Let them stampede behind your back.
Let them rant.

The desired result will be your ultimate payment.

And it will be glorious.

******

Will isn't sure what sets him off, knowing that Jack's wife is sick, but it is so clear suddenly. How easily lives end sometimes. He swallows against the bile that wants to rise at the mention of failed hopes and experiments, fighting against the memory of needles in his skin.

Winston and Buster buffet him that night, laying there with them on the floor, his hand and arm in fur, secure and warm, staring unseeing into the dying embers of the living room fire.

****

Donald's company is pleasant, his mental capacities delightful. You are supremely pleased to hear his thoughts, the dinner going very well. And then he refers to Will as a pig and the world goes dark, time slowing to a crawl, your answering question thundering in your ears.

Will wants more tests.

You decide to use the situation to get rid of an old friend.

******

It was so easy to convince Donald to tell you when exactly the appointment with Will was. You wait in one of the other offices, expanding your hearing a bit, following his heartbeat through the city. He is a bit nervous, something you cannot fault him for. After all he knows something is amiss, even if he does not yet know what.

The whirr of the machinery comes to life, Donald's steps announcing his return to his office. Probably watching the scan from his own computer. How convenient.

You walk into the office without further ado, Donald looking up at the slight squeaking sounds the fitted plastic suit makes when you move. He frowns, voice alight with amusement.

„Hannibal! What an… interesting surprise."

You smirk at him and then rush at him, the burst of supernatural speed short enough not to tax too much. You pick up the scissors on your way, bearing down with all the power of your mental might, Donald's eyes going wide.

You grin and then start, the gurgling sounds quite befitting in your opinion. The door opens and you pause, the ‚Glasgow smile' very much finished already. The smell of decay reaches you and you smirk in utter delight, this coincident truly fortunate. You listen to the machinery for a moment, the sound non existent. So Will will be on his way. Time is short then.

You round the table, watching her watch you, eyes wide. Will she be able to describe you? No matter. You hear the door close down the corridor and press the scissors into her hand, disappearing down the other hallway.

You hear his heart speed jump into gallop, frantic and you smile grimly to yourself, beginning to pull off your suit when you reach your car.

Time to get ready for a call from Jack.

****

Jack does not call. Instead he comes by and you use the moment to inform him of Will's supposed mental illness. It will fester now in Jack's brain, make him doubt whatever Will might tell him.

You refuse to feel bad because of it.

You visit Lucille afterwards, bearing groceries as a gift.
She looks at you with a smug smile, the red liquid in her glass sloshing gently when she extends her arm to invite you in. AB negative if you are not mistaken.

„Hannibal. What a pleasant surprise."

You bend down to ghost a kiss to her cheek, noting how her skin feels a bit more elastic than the last time you met.

„May I cook for you? I can see you have recently fed but let me make up some of the trouble you have with me?"

She hums, looking at you coyly, her other hand pushed into her hip. She turns, walking into the house, trusting you to follow. She hops onto the counter in her kitchen, her hand extending in another invitation.

„You know I always appreciate your … trouble, Hannibal. It keeps things spicy."

You pause the unpacking, locking your gaze.

„I am glad. Your support is invaluable."

She smirks at you, taking a sip of her blood, smacking her lips lightly afterwards.

„I do hope you know what you are doing though, Hannibal. As you may remember, flirtations with the police tend to not end well. Even if you have managed to escape the police until now."

She tilts her head, narrowing her eyes, watching you chop the vegetables.

„What are your plans if you are caught. How will you stop them from analyzing your DNA?"

You turn to retrieve a pan, pouring some of the truffle oil into it.

„As you are undoubtedly aware, Berlioz is working on a way to mask our extra genes via a temporary retroactive therapy. I believe he is testing it now."

You put the filet in, simple pork this time, literally, as you know Lucille prefers the human liquids. You pour two glasses of white wine, brought with you in a cooler and hand one to her, continuing the conversation.

„He has assured me that he will be able to send me the treatment in form of some pills, differing in intensity and therefore duration of the effects. I believe if anyone can do this, Berlioz can. Don't you agree?"

Lucille tilts her head and reaches for the wine glass with her other hand, toasting you with it before she takes another sip.

„Agreed."

You hesitate, turning the filet in the pan, opting for honesty.

„I am sorry about Tobias, Lucille, but I would do so again."

She chuckles, a dark chuckle that makes the jewelry on her throat tinkle.

„No worries, Hannibal, there will be others. As you know."

She takes another sip of her blood, leaning forward a bit.

„Also, Robertas has told me of your… progress regarding your little… protégé. A conjoining beginning at this stage is very unusual. There are those that think it might put the coven too much at risk if he remains unturned, Hannibal. They fear he may be able to see too much too soon."

You clench your teeth for a moment, keeping your eyes down.

„There are risks."

You take the filet and put it into the oven with the pan, setting the temperature and timer. You turn back to her, her eyes watching you intently.

„In order to have it all, Lucille, one must risk all. If my … games fail, I trust my body will be destroyed before they will be able to take a closer look."

She cackles, drowning her glass.

„Ah, no worries, Hannibal, if you fail, I will burn you myself."

You incline your head in acceptance, noting the omission of the word ‚body', the warning loud and clear.

Maybe it is time to prepare alternative routes.

And fake some passports.

Pulling the truth

Chapter Notes

Yay, I'm finally back into it :) Sorry for the long pause, as I said in the quick chapter update, RL :)
(I'm keeping that chapter for the comments, no idea if they'd be deleted as well.)

Hope you enjoy!

It is amusing, really, to chat to him.
Ignorant to the deeper layers of deception he so desperately craves to understand, his taste superficial. Frederick Chilton would be a nuisance if he was not so utterly useful to you.

And he would be long dead if this was not the case.

Sometimes the vaguely interesting discussions bring forth a zest of refreshing insight though. Past experience colors your tone, hidden behind humor.

„If force is used, the subject will only surrender temporarily.“

Which is why rewriting Will’s pathways to your design is inescapable. Your thoughts flit back in time, to another one you craved, long ago. A pale comparison to what you feel now and yet - errors of the past must not be repeated.

You look up, smiling at an inane pun, resolving to try to reach -him- later.

****

Wet breath, shivering down his spine.

Will tries to breathe deep, tries to dislodge the feeling. The antlered shadow crosses his path and he looks up, unable to do anything else, the majestic head turning to him slightly. The eyes are red, deep, and Will jerks with another puff of air, fighting the urge get even closer to the beast, the purple-green feathers glinting. He raises his hands, sluggish like under water, sounds faraway suddenly, breath harsh in his own ears.

The feathers are soft and yet rigid, tickling his palm and the beast makes a weird sound, soft and grumbling and then pushes close, pressing Will between its body and the wall, the ghost existence of the phantom wall cold and unforgiving.

Will shivers again, the only warmth coming off the beast in front of him, pressing against him now. He runs his hands through the fur, on either side of the beasts muscular throat and the head descends slowly, carefully, between them. A heartbeat, pulsing between them and then Will groans, tilting his head up slowly on instinct, the veins in his neck pulsing under the thins-stretched skin.

The beast tilts his head and the snout locks at the curve of Will's neck, scorching hot, the sensation drawing in, drawing in until there is a focus point of sensation, sending tendrils of heat all through Will's body. Sweat breaks out and he pants, feeling his body react, straining, unable to resist. Will gasps for air as another wave hits, heat and pain so close to iridescent pleasure, squeezing his eyes shut at the feeling. Everything fades and then the heat becomes piercing, ice hold and white hot, blood thundering like icebergs breaking apart in the distance. Will opens his dream-eyes again, unseeing, his mind conjuring the ice and water, starting to openly shiver.

The beast growls, unseen and he dissolves, the pleasure and pain piercing, wounding, ripping him out of the vision with a gasp, his headache a vicious thing, breath short. He is soaked, and in need for a shower for more than one reason, his eyes unfocused on the dog beds, his thighs still shaking.

Well fuck.

Will presses his palm down between his legs, bracing against the aftershocks, the lingering hardness feeling like a joke suddenly.

He stumbles up, climbing the stairs still trying to calm his thunderous heartbeat.

There must be something wrong.

There must be.

****

The organs look almost pretty there in the empty trees, little bow ties tied and presented for effect. Of course they do - and Will bites his tongue on this particular comment, his work with FBI already on such thin ice.

The van's doors are open and Will clambers inside, thankful for a moment alone, even if it is to envision an escape with resulting deaths. Shuddering beams of light fall, and it's almost a relief to escape the headaches and guilt, this something he knows so well.

It almost feels good.
Good enough to draw the vision even though the evidence is very clear already.

The imagined physical fight feels like elation, the pain his brain simulates for dislocating his thumb a mere afterthought, cleansing his mind. Will reopens his eyes to the real world with a

sigh, staring at the wall of the van for a long, quiet moment.

Will forces himself to clamber out of the van again, watching Zeller and Price take off the organs one by one still.

The snow drips from the branches onto the pinkish ground, diluting the red, probably as salty as the sweat that gathers on Will's brow, despite the cold. Will shivers, drawing his jacket tighter, his breath a wet cloud. Will closes his eyes for a moment, refusing to remember, spine rigid. Jack calls for him to ride back to the bureau and Will turns, eyes still closed, unseeing to follow the call.

****

You make yourself a very special brand of coffee that morning, ecstatic that you were able to reach him last night, despite his illness and your meddling.

Beautiful.

You smile at yourself and close your eyes, the tart taste of added red blood cells in your coffee prickling your tongue.

Maybe he will be more receptive now to your pulls?

Only one way to find out.

You seat yourself in the armchair in the kitchen and -reach-, the connection there but… frilly. Maybe midmorning in the sunlight is not quite the perfect time for this. You push with all your mind for a moment, can almost hear voices, can almost taste the sweat running down his brow and then it's gone, evaporating like a hand, swiping down a face and effectively wiping it away.

You huff and take another sip, your eyes on your curtains.

Another long day ahead.

And, considering you have to go and visit Miriam Lass tonight, another night, too.

******

He comes to you, once more, desperately seeking guidance. He is wearing blue again, coloring his gaze, hands clenching on the armrests. You open up the conversation with a simple inquiry, truly interested, as always.

„What did you see?“

Immediate answer, eyes locked to yours, searching for a mirror, and guidance. He explains haltingly, his voice shaking a bit. It pulls at you.

„A thicket of antlers. All I heard was my heart dim but… but fast, like footsteps fleeing into silence.“

How very interesting. His heartbeat is fast now, scared of what it may mean. You incline your head, wordlessly prompting for more.
„I don’t know how to gauge who I am anymore. I don’t feel like myself. I feel like I’ve been gradually becoming different for a while.“

His voice is brittle, the tone indicating some panic. You are transfixed, the emotions so beautiful on his face.

„Now I just feel like somebody else.“

You cannot help it.

„What do you feel like?“

Rushed on an exhale, yet halting, fear coloring every syllable.

„I feel… crazy.“

There is something. You tilt your head a bit, wondering, trying to point it out.
„And that is what you fear most.“

An aborted shake of his head, the curls moving with the impression of movement. Tears well up and you want to see them fall to lick them away.
„I fear not knowing who I am.“

Will’s eyes flit around the room and you just watch him, watch his lips quiver, watch him stumble and smile painfully on the words.
„It’s what Abel Gideon’s afraid of, isn’t it. He’s like a blind man. Somebody got inside his head and moved all the furniture around.“

Creating new housing, yes. Change is necessary for growth after all. It’s not what he wants to hear now, though. There is an almost smile on your face, your alternate ego such a perfect analogy.

„I imagine Abel Gideon would want to find the Chesapeake Ripper to gauge who he is. And who he isn’t.“

He presses his lips together and you sink your hooks deeper, inserting your force of mind for just a second.
„Will, you have me as your gauge.“

He nods after a moment, his eyes flitting around again. You watch him fidget for a moment, asking the question you already know the answer to.

„How is your sleep, Will?“

He snorts, shrugging slightly.

„Not so good. I… dream.“

He licks his lips, rubbing a hand over his face with an exhausted huff right after before locking eyes with you again. You would give quite a lot to know his dreams.

„Could you…“

Will hesitates and you smile, already knowing where this is going.

„Of course.“

You get up and he follows, unable to stay away, hovering two feet behind you when you open the cabinet. You shake three sleeping pills out of the little bottle, silently lamenting the fact that you cannot work on his mind tonight, your responsibilities to Miriam Lass preventing it. Will’s voice pulls you back, something offsetting in the tone.

„You have quite the collection there.“

You turn around and give the three pills to him with a smile, carefully exuding geniality.

„Indeed. I prefer to not send my patients to the pharmacies. Here, take these when you return home, you will hopefully sleep deeply and dreamlessly within 30 minutes then.“

He nods and you watch him rub his neck for a moment before he turns, the first step hesitant. You want to step after and touch his neck, feel the way the muscles and bones would yield beneath your hand. You resist.
He leaves with a nod and you call after him, already longing for his gaze.

„Good Night, Will. Sleep well.“

****

You decide to use your speed for tonight’s business, the highway southeast riddled with accidents. You cannot resist and enter his house on a whim, the dogs pacified by sausages, yipping and wagging their tails. He is prone on his back, neck at a weird angle, a sheen of sweat on his brow.

You sit down on the side of his bed gingerly, pushing a stray lock from his forehead. He is breathing deeply, regularly, his eyes barely moving beneath their lids, the pills you gave him

doing their job. You push your hand onto his neck, massaging it with controlled movements, feeling the muscle roll under the skin, the way the bone shifts slightly. Will moans under your hand and you sigh, inhaling the scent of his blossoming arousal deeply, your own body responding to it. You continue to knead his neck and the curve of his shoulder for a few moments longer before you withdraw your hand, using it to give yourself a pull, your smells mixing.

So his throat is one of his erogenous areas.
Of course it is.

He might be the death of you yet.

You snarl quietly and then take off again, not daring to stay any longer, your teeth throbbing sharply.

You do not stay very long with her tonight, her innocence and acquiescence a distinct counterpart to what you need now. There are rocks crumbling just beyond the terrace and you make a mental note to implement a safety harness just in case.

The night is dark and you rush through it, scanning for and finding a drug dealer on a side road just outside Baltimore, counting his money. The shot of his gun rings loud in your ear, but it does not matter, the blood rushing into your mouth, and you need it tonight, releasing the opiates into the blood stream, closing the circle of arousal. You squeeze your eyes shut and envision him in his bed as you come, the breaking of bones alerting you to the fact that you squeezed too hard.

You drop the pulp of a body, broken and bent, adjusting yourself with a snarl, setting the car on fire as you leave.

It would not do to let them find the opiates in the blood.
Baltimore rushes by and you return just before dawn, the envelope sitting on the desk for you to find.

You open it and smile, the three passports dropping into your hand.
It might be a bit premature.

Maybe.

****

Will wakes late, his dogs sleeping peacefully long last their feeding time today. He stretches, surprised when his neck does not hurt for once, his body thrumming with something undefinable. He adjusts himself, wondering what dream may have triggered this reaction once more, more pronounced than usual, thoughts shifting lazily. He rolls himself out of bed and goes up for the shower, drawing on his favorite fantasy when he grips himself, a vision of

skin and lips and movement, indiscernible, to use as needed. The vision shifts and Will gasps under the spray, his hand speeding up. Teeth glint in a sharp smile and he comes with a long moan, falling a bit forward, his forehead coming to rest on the cold tiles, the water cascading over his shoulders, taking all traces of his pleasure with it.

Well, fuck.

He washes himself down with shaking hands, trying to make sense of it all, his nerves frayed when he dresses for work, resorting to very comfortable clothes today. His cell beeps and he reads the text, calling him down to the lab for a meeting. Shivers run down his spine, the sound of water accompanying it and Will forces himself to not check the shower a third time, fully aware that he turned it off already. He prepares his dogs' food, frowning when they trod over lazily, their eating un-rushed. Another text and Will curses under his breath, snagging his keys.

****

Will grinds his teeth, watching Jack walk up the path to where they suspect Gideon is, the dome of the observatory glinting in the lights of the dozens of cars. He wipes at his brow, pressing his fingers into his temple for a long moment. His afternoon chat with Alana has left him unsettled, the clutch for balance unsettling him even more, her verdict of him utterly on point. He had even shifted into Gideon's mind for a second, reciting his thought process in front of his colleagues. Will squeezes his eyes shut for a moment, flashes of tongues hanging from throats like a tie behind his eyes. Like flowers and chocolate before a first date… The copied kill showing them exactly where they would find Gideon. Why? Why does it feel personal? He opens his eyes again, unseeing on the windshield, watching Jack go. He fidgets and then gets out, staring after the men and starting to follow them, slowly. Something tugs at him, a pull and then a gust of warm air and he looks over, towards the movement at the left side of his vision.

The black stag stares at him, lowering its majestic head before it turns and stalks away through the snow and Will doesn't even question it, he -has- to follow.

****

It's a decision made from a bout of jealousy, the smell of Alana's perfume on him triggering a violent reaction. You want to see him. Need to. You watch as Jack starts towards the observatory, deeming the moment fitting, concentrating and then reaching, his heartbeat picking up and responding, turning towards the trees.

You grin triumphantly, the bad mood after having to go out and kill another superfluous colleague in order to make the police understand vanishing when your pull results in Will following you, willingly. You look back at him, wondering what his mind may see as he follows you, glassy eyes and no recognition obvious in them. No matter. You pull once more and he comes, entering the car willingly. You smile, watching Gideon hurry towards his supposed escape route, only to be redirected by Will.

You watch them drive off and then take to the sky, speeding off to get there first.

****

You paint a pleasant smile on your face, careful to let it drop as you see them both, Will swaying lightly, his gun at Gideon's neck.

You step back, allowing them both in, careful not to get in their way as you lead them into the dining room, watching as Will pushes Gideon into your seat at the head of the table, stepping closer to you, his scent heavy in the air.
He raises his feverish eyes to yours, the plea in them a beautiful thing.

It makes your mouth water.

„I'm… I'm having a hard time thinking. I feel like I'm losing my mind. I don't know what's real."

You pretend to be disappointed, carefully hiding your feelings of triumph of his dependency on you, reciting the time and place slowly.

„It's 7:27 PM. You're in Baltimore, Maryland. Your name is Will Graham."

He interjects, increasingly agitated, his voice loud, raising his voice at Gideon on his inquiry.

„No, no, no, no, I don't care who I am. Tell me…if he's real."

You narrow his eyes, various possibilities flitting through your brain. You wonder for a split second if you should stop here, see the throbbing of the vein in his temple. On the other hand the opportunity is beyond good and so you decide to push some more, his brain so beautifully on fire.

„Who do you see, Will?"

The answer is immediate, fearful, wanting and needing the confirmation.

„Garret Jacob Hobbs. Who do you see?"

You purse your lips, looking over at Gideon for a moment, the man staring at them both, utterly interested. You lick along the line of your teeth before answering, chancing it all.

„I don’t see anyone.“

Panic permeates the air, like citrus on dust, coming off of Will in waves. He points at Gideon, his voice trembling.

„He’s. Right. There.“

You narrow your eyes, forcing your will on him slowly, pushing.

„There’s no one there, Will.“

„You’re lying.“

It shouldn’t hurt and yet it does, making you doubt for just a second. You push on regardless, this the only route now.

„We’re alone. You came here alone. Do you remember coming here?“

„Please don’t lie to me.“

He pleads once more and it should be beautiful but it is painful instead, proof of how invested you are already, and suddenly you want it to end, pushing, your voice rising a bit to get through to him, imploring.

„Garret Jacob Hobbs is dead. You killed him. You watched him die.“

His scent spikes and he cries out, anguished, voice breaking.

„What’s happening to me…“

You put everything you can into your voice, needing to push through to him.

„You’re having an episode. I want you to hand me your gun.“

There is a sound that punches through you, a sound you have heard from your victims before, a high pitched, choked sound, triggering associations. It is disconcerting and arousing to hear it from him, and suddenly you wish to be alone with him, to be able to draw more of these sounds.

Maybe it is a good thing that Abel Gideon is watching you.

Will convulses slightly and then shudders and you call his name, watching as his eyes roll up, his mouth dropping open, features slack. You step close and take the gun from him, gently, feel how even in subconsciousness his fingers reach for you, the twitch into your direction beautiful in its own right. You put it on the chimney still, pushing his head up so you can get a better look. His lips are so close. You pretend to look at his eyes though you don’t really need to, everything you need to know on his scent anyway. You push your hand up his forehead, the way his hair feels imprinting itself in your mind. Your hands find his neck of their own accord and you lower your head, concentrating hard on not leaning in, his skin tantalizing close.

You swallow, forcing yourself to move away, taking the gun and examining it. You keep your tone light, vaguely annoyed that you have to play the game now, even though you brought it on yourself. Best laid plans and all that.

„He's had a mild seizure."

Abel Gideon narrows his eyes, fascination stealing itself into his features, watching you with maniac but highly intelligent eyes.

„That… doesn't seem to bother you."

You shoot him a look, annoyed that you have to repeat yourself, and to a colleague at that, your grip on the gun tight for just a second, letting your annoyance color your tone.

„I said it was mild."

You sit down, putting the gun onto the table deliberately lightly, the soft click nonetheless loud. You choose your words carefully, deciding to use Gideon further.

Wanting to have Will to yourself for just a few minutes.

„Are you the man who claimed to be the Chesapeake Ripper?"

Gideon frowns at you, thrown and yet validated, torn in his response.

„Why do you say claimed."

Hilarious. You allow your lips to twitch, just a bit.

„Because you're not. You know you're not and you don't know much more about who you are beyond that."

You continue, fueling the fire of resentment, redirecting it.

„A terrible thing to have your identity taken from you."

Smugness in Gideon's tone, smugness you know only too well.

„I'm taking it back one piece at a time. You should see the pieces I got out of my psychiatrist."

You look over at Will, another whiff of Alana's perfume reaching you. You wonder what they did to get her scent onto Will's clothing. You decide to use her as well.

„Alana Bloom was one of your psychiatrists, too. Is that right?"

There is a weird tone in Gideon's voice, he's drawing out her name.

„Yes. Dr. Bloom."

You push your will onto Gideon, letting him no choice.

„I can tell you where to find her.“

It festers in Gideon’s brain and he nods, seizing the opportunity and getting up. He hesitates in the doorway, chancing a look at Will. You step forward, watching as he literally recoils, survival instincts working overtime. You drive him through the door, sending him off with the recital fo Alana’s address, watching him drive off with screeching tires.

You raise your head to the starlit sky, watching as your breath fogs before returning inside, observing Will just standing there, swaying gently. He leans towards you as you step close, unconsciously wanting to be close, and you reach up, pushing his curls from his forehead.

You inhale deeply, pushing your face close, letting your lips drag along his carotid, stubble catching on your skin and your teeth dropping without any conscious thought.

It would be so easy.

You tear yourself away with a growl, stepping away until you can breathe again, the desire to embrace him and make him yours right this second a clawing, vicious thing. Your heartbeat slows again, slowly and you force your teeth back up as you see his eyelids flutter, sure signs of returning consciousness. You put your genial mask back into place with an effort, calling out to him.

„Will… can you hear me?“

He nods, still out of it and it makes you smile, his response to you so beautiful.

„Repeat after me. My name is Will Graham.“

Will frowns, nonetheless following your lead, repeating with a raw voice and you sigh quietly to yourself, warmth spreading through you, reaching out to indicate the gesture.

„Raise both of your arms.“

He does so, halfway and you help him a bit, asking for more, pushing a bit force into it when you instruct once more.

„Although you may not feel like it, I need you to smile.“

He hesitates, his exhausted eyes searching yours, looking for confirmation. You wait it out, the smile he offers you a painful thing, yet nonetheless important. You offer him an honest warm one in return, clasping his shoulder to steer him into a seat.

„Good. It wasn’t a stroke. You may have had a seizure. Tell me the last thing you remember.“

„I was… with Garret Jacob Hobbs.“

Very interesting. Seeing dead things, his mind superimposing supernatural images onto reality, probably trying to make sense of the little things he picks up.

It makes you proud.

You push your hand up his forehead, delighted when he allows it, even leans into it for a split second, resplendent in his suffering. You keep your tone gentle, knowing he will reach his decision without more of your meddling.

„You have a fever. You were hallucinating. You thought he was alive. In the room with you.“

He rebukes you, still so sure of himself.

„I saw him.“

„He’s a delusion disguising reality. Don’t let that let you slip away. You killed Garret Jacob Hobbs once. Can find a way to kill him again.“

You get up, wondering for just a split second, unsure if it may be better to go with him or let him pull through on his own. You decide to let him go, your presence at a potential crime scene easily misconstrued. Or, rightly so. Your lips twitch with the irony. You pull out your cuffs, making a show of putting on your coat until he notices it, tone bordering on incredulous.

„Where are you going?“

You shift around in your coat, trying to introduce a sense of urgency into your voice, claiming the facts for yourself.

„I’m worried about Alana Bloom. Abel Gideon is still at large. He mutilated Dr. Chilton. They found him clinging to life.“

Will get up and you round the table, shaking your head, grasping his shoulders. His hands hold onto your coat for just a moment too long before he sits down again, and you drone on, checking that the keys and gun are in his line of vision while crossing over to the kitchen.

„You’re in no state to go anywhere but the hospital. I’ll call Jack Crawford. Tell him where you are.“

You step around the corner and walk over to the phone, the stumbled steps from the dining room preceding the soft chiming sounds as Will grabs the keys, stumbling out the front door without a backward glance. You smile to yourself, calling a cab for him, knowing he won’t be in any condition to open the Bentley with the fever wracking his brain. Or to drive at that. You step back out, noticing that he took the gun as well, pleased. You take your coat off again and get yourself one of your special vintages, settling in to wait for Jack Crawford’s call.

Hoping.

****

Jack doesn't call but comes by instead, picking you up, bearing news of an almost perfect outcome, the diagnosed fever the only setback, his treatment not in your hands anymore.

Well, there's always something.

You wonder if he will remember, the light treatment overdue. You suggest to remove Will's right to carry firearms, some sixth instinct telling you he will wreak hell on you if he ever remembers.

You have to suppress a smile at the thought, something in you yearning to find out.

****

You decide to speak to her again, needing to formulate your thoughts on him. It is obvious she is jealous of him by now, and you force the feeling by speaking of friendship, a state you never reached with her.

When you sink your teeth into her thigh later, the bitter taste of the emotion rolls over your tongue, impossible to hide from you, making you grin, some of the blood spilling. You do not feel particularly sorry for the stain and you leave her still too high on your opiates to scold you.

You decide to order some chicken for a special soup.

It's always good to bear gifts for visits after all.

Forced Decisions

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long, my app crashed, taking 3k with it.
(And yes, the backup file was corrupted as well, yippieh)
Anyway, that is why this little 8k thing :) is only up today and not a week back.
Hope you enjoy!

___

You schedule an appointment on a whim, the official set up an indication for her to be aware that you wish to talk and not just feed. Though this may come at a later point. You eye the setting sun for a moment, flitting back to how much you have fed. It should suffice.

She is poised, a bit withdrawn. And she cannot quite hide her annoyance, her patience firmly based on her profession, eyes cold. You could not care less.

„Will Graham is troubled."

You have to give it to her, she sees right past some of your… layers.

„And that troubles you beyond professional concern for a patient."

Very much. You click your tongue, trying for the right words.

„I see his madness, and I want to contain it. Like an oil spill."

She narrows her eyes, catching the hidden meaning. You chose her well.

„Oil is valuable. What value does Will Graham's madness have for you?"

A bit too cocky. You let the smile touch your mouth.

„Are you suggesting I'm more fascinated with the madness than the man."

She raises one perfectly groomed eyebrow, her hair glinting in the light.

„Are you?"

If only it were this easy. You wonder if she is aware of the conditions of a full turning. Your answer is simple, then.

„No.“

She narrows her eyes just a fraction, stumped a bit. You hide your grim smile.
You decide to throw her a bit more of the why.

„Will realized early on that he saw things differently than other people. Felt things differently.“

Her comeback is almost instinctual showing how much she knows about you, really.

„So did you.“

Very true. The words come by themselves, almost without volition.

„I see myself in Will.“

Her tone is acerbic, just a bit, the taste of the emotion she cannot contain heavy in the air.

„Do you see yourself in his madness?“

Madness… how amusing.

„Madness can be a medicine for the modern world. You take it in moderation, it’s beneficial.“

There is a distinct warning note in her voice now, and you cannot help but wonder for a split second.

„You overdose and there are unfortunate side effects.“

Indeed. But… time tends to erase all those unfortunate side effects, one way or another. Something she can dream off. And does.

„Side effects can be temporary. They can be a boost to our psychological immune systems to help fight the existential crises of normal life.“

A blink, her mind daring to edge closer to the literal truth.

„Will Graham doesn’t present you with problems from normal life.“

No, he does not. And isn’t it oh so refreshing.

„No, he doesn’t.“

She is careful now, wanting to know but at the same time she dreads what she may hear, her instincts telling her to back off, her curiosity needing to know.

„What does he present you with?“

You taste the words in your mouth, already tasting so false.

„The opportunity for friendship.“

Something you and her will never have. She shifts, trying to rebuke the notion immediately.

„He's still your patient, Hannibal. When it comes to Will Graham, if your impulse is to step forward, force yourself to take a step back."

Your voice is flat, the words sour in your mouth.

„And just watch him lose his mind?"

She keeps her tone kind but her eyes are cruel on yours, too wise for her mortal years. You wonder whose visions she may have seen in blood, and recently.

„Sometimes all we can do is watch."

You look away for a moment, gathering your thoughts. Somebody has shown her some of your past, you are certain of it suddenly. You look back at her and let your eyes wander, the way her skin looks so frail and yet glowing. Old blood, given a sip of in return.

Interesting.

You leave her shortly after, no appetite to taste her today present.

******

The bird you ordered arrives later and so you change your afternoon plans to cook for him. The hospital food would be not sufficient for his special needs after all, the recipe for this very old.

You prick your finger on the bones on purpose, watching the red fade away in the broth.

You smile.

The way downtown to the hospital takes too long in your opinion, the soup put away properly but still it won't do if it will cool too much. Your lips twitch in amusement at yourself and these petty worries.

You don't need to ask where he is, the sound of his heartbeat leading your way. You time your steps so you can enter as the nurse leaves, placing your bag on the table quietly. He is asleep, hair tousled, beard untended. The vein in his neck pulses sedately, drawing you in, irresistibly. Your fingers hover over his skin for a long moment before you let them rest against his pulse, feeling the little push against your own skin. Life, rushing in his veins. Your teeth ache sharply but you refuse to let them drop, stepping back as you feel him return to consciousness, his smell sharpening. You turn to your bag, fidgeting for a moment, before

you start to unpack, waiting for him to address you. You smile to yourself when he does, his voice a bit gruff from disuse.

„Smells delicious.“

You should very much hope so.

„Silkie chicken in a broth. A black boned bird prized in China for its medicinal value since the 7th century. With wolfberries, ginseng, ginger, red dates and star anise.“

Does he realize the recipe was chosen specifically to help with the inflammation in his mind? You put the lids away carefully, waiting.

„You made me chicken soup.“

Chicken soup. Your smile turns a bit sour, realizing there will be much to learn after all. You weigh your head, unable to keep the slightly annoyed huff in.

„Yes.“

His lips twitch and you narrow your eyes, astonished and wondering how much he made fun of you just now, the prospect a very interesting one. And promising, indeed. He pushes himself up and it derails your train of thought, you step close before you can think about it, offering your hand. He hesitates and then grabs your hand, using your strength to pull himself up. You extend your other hand and help him up, letting yourself revel in his nearness for a moment. He smells of hospital soap and sweat, his innate body odor enhanced by the still raging encephalitis, only kept at bay by the antibiotics. You would need to sway just a bit forward to feel his hair on your lips. He gives you a crooked smile and then steps back, drawing you out of your musings, the separation almost a physical pain, seating himself in the chair at the little table.

You sigh quietly to yourself and then seat yourself across from him, enjoying the way the light plays on his features. You clear your throat, opening the conversation.

„The nurses tell me you’ve been wandering, Will.“

An aborted shrug, unapologetic.

„I was awake. And wandering with purpose and good intentions.“

The light of him is illuminating his darkness so beautifully. You extrapolate, easily.

„Visiting that unfortunate young woman suffering from delusions?“

An almost snort, humor tempering the pain.

„She’s my support group.“

The emotions and the words taste foul in your mouth, and you have to force yourself to remember that he is not ready, not yet. You have to keep the goal in mind.

„And I hope you're her's. Nothing more isolating than mental illness."

He changes the subject, abject resignation mixing with rejection.

„I know Dr. Sutcliffe was a friend."

Well. For a while. He was useful, too. It's easy to alleviate her of any guilt, returning the ball to his court.

„She didn't murder Dr. Sutcliffe. Her disease did. I can't blame her for his death any more than you can be blamed for shooting Abel Gideon."

He draws back, trying to distance himself from this, physically and emotionally.

„The hallucinations, the loss of time, sleepwalking. Could that have all just been the fever?"

Maybe. Not in his case though.

„It's possible."

He interprets the undertone differently, his tone colored by abject resignation. It hurts you, like it has no right to already.

„What else is possible?"

„Fevers can be symptoms of dementia. Dementia can be a symptom of many things happening in your body or mind that can no longer be ignored."

„Does Jack know?"

There was nothing to be gained by telling him yet.

„That this could be more than a fever? No. I haven't told him."

He frowns, some kind of instinct telling him that this is, indeed, weird.

„Shouldn't you?"

In your own time. Which may be soon. For now, you reassure him.

„Not until we know for certain. What we must do now is continue to support and monitor your recovery. The young woman you were visiting. How is her recovery?"

Will pulls a face, emotions displayed beautifully.

„I don't think she wants to recover. Afraid to remember what she did."

That would be a nuisance, indeed.

„Can't say I blame her."

******

‚Afraid to remember what she did.‘

Will’s words keep running through your mind as you make your way back uptown, the Bentley’s engine a low backdrop, the ultra-violet-filtering windshield offering a glimpse at the fading afternoon sky, the setting sun a warm orange.

‚Sometimes all we can do is watch.‘ Bedelia’s words echo, hollowly.

You were watched killing Dr. Sutcliff. It did seem opportune at the time.

What if you were watched by someone else.
Bedelia may have thrown you a hint in her spite.

You toy with the phone in your pocket for a moment, wondering if you should call Robertas and then decide against it, the powerful vampire already entwined too much in this.

You turn the Bentley back towards the hospital instead.

You park the car two blocks over, rushing over fire stairs and roofs, too fast to be seen in the freshly fallen night. Your gloves’ leather creaks when you grip the rooftop entrance door’s handle and break it. You drop down the stairs center to her floor, training your senses to enter her room unwitnessed.

She is healing nicely, her eyes much clearer. A fascinating patient. There is a white cotton coat draped over the back sofa, with a comb next to it and a little pot of antibiotic cream. Basic amenities for the short times spent out of the oxygen tank.

You reach for a moment, feeling his heartbeat on the other side of the ward.
Not now.

You toy a bit with the comb, the almost inaudible sound as you drag your nails along its teeth sending a shiver along her skin on sheer instinct. She rubs her arms, mindful of the scar tissue and you sigh, annoyed that you have to take this route.

The comb fits through the ventilation slots and you time it just right so the fan pushes it in. Vanity will seal her fate then.

It is a grisly death and one you have witnessed too often, this one of the few secure ways to ensure permanent death. Her hand presses against the glass to the last, reaching by instinct and you gnash your teeth as you retrace your steps, away, away, your heart beating hard in your chest.

Her hand looked liked -her- hand, did it not. You squeeze your eyes shut on the roof for a long moment and then banish the thought, inhaling deeply. You tear yourself away, returning

to your car. The phone rings as soon as you sink into the seat and you scowl at it, aware that you have to answer this number.

******

A fledgling opens her door, proof of the fact that Lucille does not exactly regard the rules as written in stone, the young woman's hunger so openly on her face that it would have scared mortals away on sheer instinct. She smiles at you, tightly, her fangs dragging along her lower lip.

Hungered out but holding her ground by a thread.
It's a technique to purify a vampire's blood, heighten its potential for a little while.

You gather you will not see this woman again, likely to be fodder for Lucille's youth renewal. It's distasteful in your eyes. You have always preferred open intent and an equal fight for it, the fury and then surrender in the blood delicious. Well, maybe not always equal. Still. You step past her and walk down the hallway, following the sound of clinking glass.

„Hannibal."

She awaits you, draped across a divan, the red liquid in her glass a ruby temptation. She offers you some with a wave of her hand and you incline your head, pouring yourself some from the carafe on the little side table. You inhale, deeply, the aroma mouthwatering. Lucille pats the divan next to her and you sit down primly, careful not to crinkle her dress, your mind conjuring images of beheaded fools that were not careful enough a few decades back just fine. You take a sip, the blood rolling down your tongue, a heady mixture of O negatives, all taken while high on ecstasy. You moan, your head falling back for just a second, colors erupting on every swallow. Lucille chuckles and follows suit, humming quietly before she smacks her lips, her words quiet and teasing. Brutally firm.

„This little game with the FBI's pet has gone long enough, don't you think, Hannibal? If you dangle him along the ropes for much longer he might gather enough knowledge to try to indict you."

You frown, your tongue heavy from the drugs.

„This was not my intention, as you well know."

She hums, her eyebrows raising.

„Oh, I know. But time is not on your side this time, Hannibal. And neither is technology. Bedelia has informed me of your hesitations."

Instant fury and abject resignation fuse in your gut. So Bedelia has made fallback plans herself. Lucille heaves a sigh, grudging acknowledgement coloring her tone.

„Changing him takes too long, which, I guess, speaks for him and his rather intriguing mind. And probably for your future union. But. You were recorded by security cameras killing Dr. Sutcliff, Hannibal, as well as seen by that woman. It is a good thing you took care of her by yourself, otherwise I would not have been able to convince the coven to let you handle the situation by yourself further. The enforcers have deleted the recordings before the police got hold of them by the way.“

Fuck. You close your eyes, very sure to not utter the word, knowing she is not done yet. Her tone is too soft.

„You are getting careless, Hannibal. You draw too much attention outside your human mask. If you wish to keep him alive for now, you will make sure he takes the blame for your little games.“

She takes another sip, her voice taking on a dreamlike quality, sounding like thunder in your ears.

„You can figure out how to change him further along the way.“

She smiles cruelly, reaching out to trail a finger down your cheek, following the line of your jaw.

„Or I will turn him now, remove the threat to our coven this way. He is handsome enough to please everybody concerned after all.“

You jerk a way, furious when she laughs, your mind a loud static. Her words are a dismissal.

„I thought not. A shame though, I would have liked to take him to a coven event. Very well then, Hannibal. You have work to do.“

******

Robertas awaits you when you return home, the house dark and cold. He has opened the curtains, watching the night sky, the sunrise still far off. You grind your teeth, weary and nerves frayed, not in the mood for a sparring just now.

Robertas lifts his hand, holding off your train of thought before you can voice it, his posture demure. Well, demure for a vampire demanding obedience that is.

„I take it Lucille made her point clear.“

You nod, once, your mind in overdrive since you left, trying to tie up all the ends. Trying to find another way. Robertas turns to you, his jaw working. His voice is a whiplash.

„Turn him.“

„No.“

Your answer is instant, your resistance almost instinctual. Robertas pulls a face, stepping closer slowly, his voice imploring.

„Hannibal, don’t break his trust like this. Don’t, I urge you. It will trigger a fallout none of us can foresee. Better to force turn him now and let him taste the forbidden fruit than to dangle it in front of him, in disguise.“

You pull a face in distaste, knowing the truth of this but refuting it nonetheless, voice gruff.

„He is a mere mortal. How bad can it possibly be.“

Robertas gapes at you for a moment before he sits down on the sofa with a huff, shaking his head at you. He steeples his fingers in front of his face, thumbs touching his lips, eyes closed. His voice is very quiet.

„You chose the one mortal that not only fits your aesthetic tastes but also possesses the ability to fully grasp this life, the urges and its needs, who not only envisions killing for a living but also is singularly driven to contain those urges. You have befriended him, made him dependent on you, in order to change his thinking enough to let go of course, or at least that is what you’re saying and now… now you really dare to ask why betraying that mortal is a bad idea.“

You fidget and then lower yourself to the other side of the sofa, silent. Robertas sighs, deeply, his voice almost inaudible.

„It’s about her, isn’t it.“

You swallow, your words leaving your mouth without your own volition.

„Do not say her name.“

Robertas presses his hands together for an instant before he drops them, his eyes still closed.

„It’s been how long… two hundred years?“

You exhale, clicking your tongue.

„243.“

Robertas shakes his head minutely, his posture resigned.

„You were still young then, Hannibal. It is not your fault her mind fractured.“

You hiss, your teeth dropping, for once not caring whether the older vampire would take it as a sign of aggression.

„Misha deserved more than the fire.“

Robertas does not move, posture unchanged. He nods, slowly reaching towards you with his right hand, settling on your shoulder. He squeezes softly, his words almost inaudible.

„I had accepted her as your sister as well, Hannibal, the guilt is mine to bear. I should have turned her, not let you do it, your blood not strong enough then."

His fingers dig in, until it is painful, accentuating his words.

„All the more reason to listen to me now, Hannibal. Do not break his trust, brittle as it is, but there. Do not set him up as a scapegoat. Show him the truth and take him away from here for a few decades. Let fate decide."

You pull away, hearing the cloth tear and not caring, breathing difficult. You force the words out, snarling.

„He would loose control all too soon, Uncle, you know it. As… as she did. And they would give him to the fire as well. He -has- to come to terms with his desire for it while he is still mortal, he has to…"

You fall silent, concentrating hard on barring the doors of your mind palace' rooms to the memories, your heart aching. Robertas voice is a whisper.

„Would it not be better to enjoy his company for a while than maybe not ever?"

The snarl rips free with a growl and you speed towards Robertas, throwing him across the room and pushing him up against the wall by the neck, your fingernails drawing blood. You seethe quietly, feeling your eyes burn.

„I will have him as my mate or not at all. The conjoining has already started."

Robertas glowers down at you for a moment before he reaches up and easily takes your hands from his throat, raising his eyebrows for a moment. He licks his lips, eyes flicking back and forth between yours.

„So you said. Very well. I have business at the coven, and will return there promptly. You can call on me there if need be."

You are thrown back and then Robertas is gone and you growl in frustration, your hands tearing the sofa apart.

******

You watch your own hand tear the blue satin on your bed where you grip it too hard, as if in slow motion, your mind in turmoil, your soul… reaching.

****

A shiver travels up Will's spine, coming to himself with a gasp, sweaty. There is an abstract longing somewhere, paired with despair and fury, burning in his soul. He tries to pinpoint it, unsure what may have triggered this emotional cocktail, this… need. He closes his eyes for a moment, flames behind his eyes, opening them again to a vision of Georgia Madchen, watching him. She shifts and Will pushes himself out of bed, following the apparition outside, his mind trying to make sense of it. She looks at him with wide eyes, unburnt yet but dead somehow, all life gone.

„See? … see?"

Will swallows and tries to say something, starting when antlers pierce through her, bursting her into flames. Will gasps and cannot look away, watching as Georgia Madchen burns away, shaken to dust by the mighty beast, now coming towards Will. He holds his ground, this presence branding up to him, his body responding, almost easily. The touch of the tips of the antlers burns through his shirt and Will wakes up, gasping, blinking rapidly at the hospital room. He pushes his hand down, willing himself to relax, heart hammering in his chest.

It's not a simple hallucination though, is it, now that his brain is not aflame anymore. It's trying to tell him something. Will squeezes his eyes shut, his mind racing. He rips off the little plastic bracelet and gets up, mouth drawn. He has to figure this out.

His fingers hover over Hannibal's number for a long moment, wondering at his own hesitance to call him for a ride.

He checks himself out and calls a cab instead.

****

It all falls into place when Will comes back to work the next day and Will is flabbergasted at the fit, the puzzle pieces coming together so easily. He could not care less that the others don't believe him though, excitement settling in his gut. He needs to talk this through, put it into words. He checks his phone for his next appointment, smiling in grim satisfaction when he sees it is the next afternoon.

He decides to pick up some more ingredients for the dog's food on the way to Baltimore.

******

Jack raises questions as to Will's state of mind and it mixes uneasily with the low simmering rage you feel at being pushed into the position to actually set him up. You try to reassure and raise doubt in equal measure, feeling deeply frayed after.

It's unsettling.

You decide to visit Bedelia to talk this through the next morning, her knowledge of the situation thorough enough to understand most of what you're saying after all. Jack's scent is heavy in the air, as is the alcohol on her breath, still.

She tries to persuade you to step back, even calling on her own history. Conjuring memories of the first time you took her blood.

Easily dismissible.

You settle in your normal seat just to make your point, waiting until she settles in hers to get back up again while holding eye contact, an itch in your mind telling you that he is coming for his appointed meeting, though he is still ways off.

It makes you agitated.

It makes her insecure and annoyed though she hides it well.

You wonder if she will risk breaking free from your arrangement.

That would be truly interesting.

******

He enters your office with strong strides, clad in flannel and confidence, his mind in overdrive. The fevered sweetness is dampened but there still, clinging to him like a decaying flower, a too sweet invitation to take advantage of. You set your jaw, tightly, crossing your legs, conscious of the fact that you are setting up barriers, your heart echoing his when he leans towards you to make up the distance between you.

You curse in your mind.

His eyes are set on yours, sparkling, clear, full of drive, watching you, seeing everything. Well, everything you deign to show him.

„I'm much better now. I feel clearer. It had to be the fever. I'm finally thinking clearly about the Copy Cat."

You swallow, knowing you must and not wanting to. You force the words out.

„The murders you're attributing to the Copy Cat have suspects, whose DNA was found on the victims."

He shakes his head, his eyes blue fire.

„So what?"

Your mouth twitches in a minute smile, tinged with longing. You wish fervently for time.

„You're choosing to ignore that?"

He pushes himself up and out of the chair, coming to stand against the window, sunlight glowing around him, pushing his fists into his pockets, energy coming off of him in waves.

„Both of those suspects are dead. I'm choosing to factor that into my psychological profile of a killer. Georgia Madchen followed me to Sutcliffe's office. She witnessed his murder, she saw the Copy Cat."

You try not to admire his silhouette and… assets, failing spectacularly. You tear your gaze away, refocusing on what needs to be done.

„Why not kill her then and there?"

Will follows the truth through his emotions, feeling it, drawing it. The air tingles with awareness, a bit of doubt stealing into your mind. You push it down.

„He must not have had time. She was an unreliable witness. And that bought him the time."

„So he framed her for the murder?"

Realization dawns, he returns to you, drawn. If anything the truth makes him even more beautiful.

„He wasn't planning on framing her. He… was planning on framing me."

Not right away. Not really. Now, yes. You force the words out, uneasy twisting with the dread in your stomach.

„You believe this is personal."

He's hunting now, you can see it in his posture, in the way he phrases his words.

„If it wasn't before, it is now. It could be someone at the Bureau, someone in the police force, someone who knows the crimes, and has access to the investigations."

You spit the words out, too fast, tasting bile.

„Someone like you."

He looks at you, brushing the comment off, agitated now, scenting the proverbial blood in the air.

„There will be evidence. I found a pattern. And now I'm going to reconstruct his thinking."

You narrow your eyes, so many things depending on his plans now.

„How do you intend to do that?"

A smile twitches at the corner of his lips, the path so clear to him now, his eyes burning into yours.

„Take Abigail back to Minnesota. Start where the Copy Cat started. With Garret Jacob Hobbs."

You look away, unable to hold his gaze, knowing your rebuttal will force him to step up his game even more.

„Will, this is venturing into the paranoid. I can't allow you to pull Abigail into your delusion."

His voice rises, anger coloring his tone, gesticulating jerkily before striding off.

„This isn't a delusion. I'm not hallucinating. I haven't lost time. I am awake and this is real."

You close your eyes, following his departure, your mind racing. Your hand is forced now. You could still kidnap him and turn him, theoretically. You swallow, yearning and then you look at the light streaming in, knowing there weren't enough sessions to truly awaken his desires yet.

You get up and prepare the recording of Miss Lounds instead, calling Miriam afterwards to have a room prepared. You feel it might be needed. Soon.

You hesitate and then pack a suitcase with clothes in Abigail's size, packing it and an assortment of groceries and books into the Bentley. Sending the text doesn't take long.

You settle down then, waiting for Jack, playing your part on autopilot when he arrives. The Bentley hums to life just as you feel his heartbeat speed off, most likely on a plane.

You smile, grimly.

******

You wait for them in the Hobbs' house, having brought your prepared items with you, the blood pump sitting ominously in a corner. His heartbeat has left again some time ago, her's is coming closer, beating rapidly, propelling her through the woods. Using your powers like this may not be the wisest just now, using up too much blood but you need to know after all.

You smile when you hear the door, waiting silently.
She rushes into your arms, instinctually looking for safety, albeit in the wrong place, if one is honest.

„What are you doing here?“

Let’s see how much of the mask you may have to drop. It’s always amusing to see the puzzle pieces click into place.

„I was worried about you. Will told me he was taking you to Minnesota. I strongly advised against it. Where is Will, Abigail?“

She draws back a bit, her huge blue eyes flitting back and forth on yours.

„I left him at the cabin. I didn’t feel safe with him. So I left him. He knows everything.“

Not quite. You hide the smile, playing into her fears.

„So does Jack Crawford.“

You can smell the terror settling into her bones, an acidic taste borne on her sweat, her words rushing out.

„If I run, they’ll catch me, won’t they. You can’t protect me anymore.“

You confirm her fears, undermining any lingering thoughts that Will might be able to help her anymore.

„They’ll arrest you when they find you. They’ll arrest Will, too.“

She blinks, eyes locked with yours now.

„Did he kill Marissa?“

Doubt, coloring her tone and you feel pride at it, at this little show of intellect. You let the truth shine through a bit more.

„They will believe he did. They will believe he killed others, too.“

You let the mask fade away, slowly, and you can see the moment everything clicks, the way she withdraws, just a bit.

„Will always said whoever called the house that morning was the serial killer. Why did you really call?“

To set things in motion of course. Such a delightful game, really.

„I wanted to warn your father that Will Graham was coming for him.“

Her voice is trembling now, still she forces the question out.

„Why?“

Simple truth now. Every word wounds her, destroys more of her hope.

„I was curious what would happen. I was curious what would happen when I killed Marissa. I was curious what you would do.“

She is fighting nausea, the aroma of bile carried on her breath.

„You wanted me to kill Nick Boyle.“

Indeed.

„I was hoping. I wanted to see how much like your father you were.“

„Ohmygod.“

You feel the need to assure her, to make sure she understands just how important Nicholas Boyle was for her development. Without him, she wouldn’t be here after all, bound to you so intrinsically.

„Nicholas Boyle is more important for you gutting him. He changed you. That’s more important than the life he clamored after.“

She is beyond pale now, still pressing on.

„How many people have you killed?“

In what timeframe? You leave it at dreadful uncertainty, the numbers inconceivable anyways.

„Many more than your father."

She blinks rapidly, her chin coming up. Brave girl.

„Are you going to kill me?“

Eventually. In all probability. You decide not to lie to her but obfuscate the truth a bit nonetheless. It would be no use to spook her too badly after all.

„I’m so sorry, Abigail. I’m sorry I couldn’t protect you in this life.“

You turn to the side and reach for the glass jar with the attached syringe, turning them both over in your hands. You turn back to her, watching as she frowns, recognizing immediately that whatever your plan may be, this item will likely not kill her. You smirk a bit, finishing the sentence.

„...but I can protect you in the life we create for you.“

She keeps her eyes on the glass jar, catching your slip of tongue.

„We?“

You nod once, stepping away and setting the jar down on the kitchen counter, extending your hand to her which she takes after a moment to your absolute delight. You lead her over and then lift her up, letting her feel your true strength for a moment, watch as goosebumps erupt on her skin, courtesy of the sheer primal instinct yelling at her to get away. She stays put and you reward her with some calming strokes up and down her arms, feeling her relax after a moment, your words low.

“-We- will bring you to a safe place in a little while, Abigail. You will not be alone there, all your needs met. It will be like an extended vacation, in a way.”

You drop your hands and then push up her left sleeve, applying some pressure to bring out the veins beneath her skin, taking care to slip in the needle as painlessly as possible. You open the valve, watching the liquid travel through the tubing. You muse a bit, half to yourself, half to her, carefully holding her arm.

„Blood rituals involve a symbolic death and then a rebirth. As with all things in the natural world, you'll adapt now and mutate later.“

„Evolve or die.“

Adapt. Evolve. Become. You wonder if you will see her evolve and become or if she will die before.

„Even if you know the state of who you are today, you can't predict who you will be tomorrow. You are defined up to now, not beyond.“

She watches you watch the blood drip down, curiosity coloring her tone.

„How would you have done it? If you were going to do it?“

An easy question, this.

„How would I have murdered you? I would have cut your throat like your father did.“

You would cut her throat like her father did if it ever came to that, ideally in a kitchen as well, the purity of the solution almost poetic.

„But you're not my father.“

You tilt your head, inspecting her words carefully, her father forever colored by his killings.

„You accepted your father. Would it be so difficult to accept me?“

Her breath stops for a moment, voice breaking and almost inaudible on the last word.

„I don't know if it would be smart.“

Clever girl. Still, a warning would be wise.

„We don't get wiser as we get older Abigail, but we do learn to or raise or avoid a certain amount of hell, depending on which we prefer. I'll need to collect some flesh. Not a pound. Only a piece. Something you can live without.“

She blinks, surprisingly unfazed at the prospect.

„You mean, like a finger?“

Definitely not. The pains you went through to get the instrument up into the cliff house… and now that Miriam had to loose her arm for the game. No.

„I couldn't bear to take your fingers, not even one. They're so lovely. I was hoping to teach you how to play the harpsichord.“

A blink and silent acquiescence, both of you watching the red liquid trickle down into the glass jar for long seconds, the aroma filling the kitchen. Fear and elation and hope and desperation hanging in the air. Delicious.

„That's enough for now.“

You remove the needle and help her down, inhaling the light aroma of sweat coating her skin, the wind still caught in her hair, leaves and wood and damp earth. You pull her into an embrace, her back to yours and hold the syringe up to her throat, next to the scar, feeling her shiver.

„This will approximate the amount of pressure. Blood leaves the body at a gallop and then a stumble. Are you ready to die, Abigail?“

She nods, an aborted nod, her voice surprisingly steady. One way or another, you really do like her enough.

„Yes. Can I push the button?“

The blood arcs through the kitchen, mimicking the blood splatter of an arterial spray, before pooling at your feet, both your eyes transfixed on the red liquid, the low light glinting off of it. You want to put your finger in it and lick it off. Badly. It’s a shame it would scare her though. You clear your throat, just a bit.

„Abigail Hobbs is dead.“

She shivers in your arms, her response bordering on automatic, her voice trembling with an exhausted and yet frantic undertone.

„Long live Abigail Hobbs.“

She starts when the low clap sounds, Robertas leaning in the doorframe of the kitchen, his leather-gloved hands making a hollow sound. He drops his hands after three claps, sighing a bit dramatically, his teeth flashing.

“I hope you don’t expect me to clean up here…”

You tilt your head just a fraction, Abigail's heartbeat frantic in your arms.

"Robertas, this is Abigail Hobbs. Abigail this is my Uncle, Robertas Lecter. He will take you to one of my … refuge homes."

You let her go slowly, holding her elbow to help her steer clear of the blood splatters, stopping her on the other side of the kitchen, your voice extra soft.

"I will need to collect that pound of flesh now, my dear."

Her eyes snap to yours, panic in them again, rolling up into her head as Robertas presses into the veins at her throat matter of factly. He holds her as she slumps a bit, not quite unconscious, the needle you insert into her neck numbing her entire left side within seconds. You pull the scalpel out, brushing her hair back gently, locking your eyes with her, pushing. Her pupils dilate and then her breathing evens out, the trance taking hold, reality shifting away from her. You smile a bit to yourself and then carefully take hold of her left lobe, the scalpel severing her ear easily from her skull, the cut clean and swift, the blood welling up as if in an afterthought. You catch it with a big bandaid, taping it into place with utmost care, your fingers coming away a bit bloody. Robertas inhales sharply, bending forward, his nose in her hair.

"Delicious aroma… fear and stubbornness and strength… is she on the menu?"

You throw him a sour look, refusing to lick her blood off your finger just to make your point clear, wiping them clean on a little handkerchief.

"No. She is not. I have needs of her, later."

You lock eyes with her again, gently releasing the hold you have on her, see awareness return, albeit slowly.
You lick your lips, addressing Robertas once more.

"The Bentley is in a barn two streets over, I'm sure you'll be able to find it by smell. Please take Abigail to Miriam and help her settle in. Safely. There are provisions in the trunk. I will need to return to Baltimore soon."

Robertas narrows his eyes, his voice sharp.

"What makes you think I am at your beck and call, Hannibal."

Your teeth throb sharply, aching to drop, but you refuse to, the snarl more instinctual.

"I am sure you know this isn't what I had in mind. It's in the coven's interest."

Abigail steps back a bit, her faraway gaze lowered, arms crossed, knowing instinctually to try to stay out of your way, her breathing shallow. Robertas glowers at you for a long moment, before he huffs, pushing himself up from the doorframe.

"So Lucille has forced your hand and you comply."

He sighs, rolling his eyes.

“You’ll see what you’ll get from that, I tell you.”

He holds up a hand before you can reply, waving it off. He holds out a hand to Abigail, waiting until she locks eyes with him, skittish and demure. Aware of the predators even in her still slightly dazed state. Robertas clicks his tongue, his voice gruff.

“I will not kill you, child, as it is so very obvious he still has plans for you. You have my word. Come.”

Abigail looks at you and you nod, pushing your intent a bit, watching your will take hold slowly. They leave, the rush of air as Robertas takes to the air with Abigail sealing her fate.

******

The air is cool as it rushes by, the night still young.

You utterly despise what you will have to do now and yet… there is a part of you that looks forward to it, forward to subjugating him to and with your powers. Feeling his life throb beneath your fingers. The weight of the tube is heavy in your pocket, the little plastic bag with her… gift an ever shifting counterweight on the other side of your coat, under the plastic kill suit you put on before making your way over here.

You drop down in the trees beyond his fore garden, the lawn iced over but mostly brown green, the earth hard. You hesitate, pulling out another plastic bag, filling in a bit of earth you scratch up from the ground. You add a sharp twig as an afterthought, knowing you will need it.

You step up on his porch, breathing in deeply.
You close your eyes and let yourself expand, the mask fading away, darkness extending along your consciousness. The windows reflect the red shine of your eyes when you open them again, and you push, feeling his canine friends yield, immediately, cowering down into their beds, eyes flitting back and forth, watching you enter but not making any sound. The room is quiet, only broken by his troubled breathing, his eye movement beneath his lids showing him in the middle of a deep dream, his body moving a bit restlessly.

What does he see now, in his dreams. Does your presence call to him? You bend down over him, inhaling deeply.
Sweat, fresh still and suffused with his innate smell, the obnoxious aftershave washed away by an evening’s shower, his hair still a bit damp from it. You reach out, hovering your plastic gloved hand over his neck for a long moment, hesitating.

There will be no way back, only the way forward.
But then it is always like this, isn't it.

You lay your hand on his neck, pressing gently on the veins while you push with your mind some more, the time it takes for the trance to ensnare him much higher than it took for Abigail, even in his sleep. You smile, the effort it takes to bend him to your will a good sign in your opinion and then you push your hand beneath his neck, pulling him up. He comes without resistance, his breathing evening out, eyes almost completely closed, though not moving any more. Waiting. His jugular pulsates under your palm and oh, how easy it would be to bend your fingers, rip the plastic and pull them through his skin, opening the fountain you yearn for so much. You let your teeth drop, the relief instant, the world tinged red. You breathe him in open mouthed, your lips ghosting over his left cheek, your mouth opening enough for the tip of your fangs to drag along the skin. The sensation travels through your body, his smell and taste making the hunger a vicious, sharp thing, clawing at your determination. You force yourself back with a snarl, stepping a bit back, your voice gruff.

"Get up, Will, and walk into the kitchen."

He gets up slowly, his movements sluggish, his eyes half open, pupils blown. You aid him towards the chair in the kitchen, helping him settle down again, pressing him back gently until his head falls back, lolling, his mouth dropping open. You breathe out slowly, feeling weirdly undecided and then pull a face, annoyed beyond measure but forcing yourself to pull the tube and the bag out. You close your eyes for a long moment, grounding yourself and then make yourself snap into your surgeon persona, your teeth retreating, practicality settling for every movement.

His mouth drops further open at your pressure, his eyes slitted.
The tube goes down easily, the bulging of his throat visible beyond his jaw, ever so slightly.

The sounds he makes are delicious, reminiscent of the sounds your victims make when you feed on them.

They're -his- sounds, traveling down your spine, settling in your gut. Deep throat.

Quick now.

You take her ear, folding it and then pushing it down into the tube, your movements a bit jerky. You force yourself to take the tube out slowly, forcing your hands to stay calm, powerless against the urge to caress his jaw afterwards, the tube glistening with spit, so warm. You grit your teeth, forcing the feeling down, your heart too swift, trying to keep up with your urges. You swallow, light headed with need, bending down to rub dirt on his feet and hands, the little twig scratching his arms in a mock up of defense wounds. He moans and you freeze, breathing heavily, his scent heavy in the air, mixing with the siren's call of copper, rising up from a thousand miniature blood drops in the thin red lines you made. You press into certain points of his body, using your medical knowledge to induce nausea, your little stunt utterly fruitless after all if his body decides to digest the meat. He shivers and you push yourself up again, your hand shaking now, putting all the items away, whispering to him.

“Back to bed, Will.”

He follows your hand on his elbow and stumbles over, falling into bed, a thin sheen of sweat settling already.
It won’t be long.

You return to the kitchen and clean up traces of earth and wood, making sure not to leave anything behind.

You hear him moan again and you don’t dare to go back to him, your teeth pressing into your lower lip, harshly. You leave his house by the back door.

******

Robertas waits for you when you finally return from the woods, some half hour later, your hunger suppressed by the gorging on the blood of a stag, found half a mile off. You work your jaw, the taste vile in your mouth, the first non-human blood you have had in… decades.

What he makes you do.

You briefly wonder if Robertas might have been right after all, the thought evaporating in anger when Robertas laughs softly, pushing himself off the hood of the Bentley, spreading his hands.

“A deer. I never thought I’d see the day again, Hannibal.”

You narrow your eyes, pressing your lips together and stalk past him, opening the trunk. You put the bloody plastic suit away, changing into a whole new outfit, uncaring of the world in the cold gray light of the coming morning. You turn back to Robertas when you tie your tie, your words chosen carefully.

“Thank you for your help, Uncle. I appreciate the leniency you provide me with.”

Robertas hums, his eyes glowing for just a moment, the tips of his fangs flashing.

“Hannibal, I doubt it was a brilliant idea to settle Abigail with Miriam. I believe they could prove to be too resourceful together.”

You frown, your voice gruff.

“Thank you for your warning, Uncle, I will heed it. If need be I will erase Miriam’s memories of Abigail.”

“You do that.”

Robertas looks over into the direction of Will’s house, listening for a moment.

“He will wake up soon.”

You exhale in a rush, donning your coat, your hands going up to flatten your hair. You close your eyes for just a moment before nodding, once.

“A long day ahead.”

Robertas nods, stepping over to you, his hand coming up slowly, as if not to spook a skittish animal. He settles it on your shoulder, pressing gently.

“Good luck.”

You incline your head and he’s gone, the displaced air ruffling your hair again and you right it with a huff, sinking into the seat of the Bentley after, time slowing to a crawl and you watch the clock on the display, waiting for his call.

Man-eater

Chapter Summary

Seeing is a dangerous thing.
And bears its own consequences.

Chapter Notes

Another almost 10k, yay^^
I got stuck on that one scene and then some of it went differently than anticipated.
Oh well.
Season finale! :)

Hope you like!

The dream is dark and wild somehow, surreal and hyper-realistic at the same time. Coldness bites into Will's skin, transferred from the cold steel of the rifle in his hand. The doe -or is it a stag?- bleeds and the color is hauntingly red and wet, calling to him. This prey is not what he is truly hunting though… Will's neck prickles and he looks up, the horned beast staring at him, daring him to see. The name comes, instinctually, something clicking into place, settling in Will's gut, his body trashing in his bed.

Wendigo.

Man-eater.

******

Will opens his eyes, the room shifting in and out of focus. His breath is fast, as is his heart, galloping, his skin sweaty. He swallows, the motion triggering the headache already. The dogs are quiet, too quiet somehow but Will cannot think, his mind fuzzy, sensations muted. He groans and shifts, his stomach lurching, the headache traveling down his neck, nausea threatening. Will squeezes his eyes shut for a moment, trying to remember where he put the Aspirin. The kitchen. He stumbles out of bed, his legs shaky and hurting.

Why do they hurt? Will frowns but pushes on, too focused on relieving the pain to inspect them now. He opens the faucet and breathes a sigh of relief when he sees the little bottle, throwing back a few. The water splatters into the sink, his mouth parched and yet watering, the room spinning around the edges. He drinks greedily, trying to wash away the taste but it's no use, his body reacting violently to the water. His stomach drops away, the kitchen spinning full circle and Will heaves, unable not to, his head feeling as if splitting open, keeping himself up by sheer force of mind.

The ear literally splashes into the sink, falling into it with a wet, sickly sound. Spit drops out of Will's mouth, the spinning out of control now, his focus narrowed down to his hands, gripping the cool counter, eyes unseeing on the ear.

Oh my god.

The world screeches to a halt, his knuckles white, thoughts arrested. Terror settles in his gut, making his legs buckle. He collapses on the cold floor, his hand flying up to cover his mouth, gasping. He squeezes his eyes shut, trying to control his breathing, coming in stuttering gasps. His mind races, desperately, uneasy if he should trust his own senses, trying to find a way out, reaching, frantically. Feathers rustle in his mind, the answer clear suddenly. Hannibal. Will crawls over to his desk, his fingers shaky when he calls.

******

The phone rings, finally and you try to feel elated that it all works out, try to find equilibrium before you pick up but you fail, your voice rough when you answer.

His voice is shaky, pleading, grating on your nerves.

You promise to come as fast as you can.

A lie he cannot know about.

You settle back into the Bentley, tracing the steering wheel before you click on the radio.

Your lips refuse to twitch into a smile.

You haven't felt guilty in a long time.

******

You time your arrival so that it seems as if you drove there really fast, the wheels crunching on the gravel. He is sitting outside on the steps, hunched over, his feet and arms displayed in the cold air.

So very finely built. The marks you made are in stark relief, the fine smell drafting over.

He has not showered.

Good for you. Or is it.

He raises his eyes to yours when you step up and you can see the disillusion in them, the broken hope. It hurts. His voice is shaky, gaze wild, flitting back and forth, his beautiful mind trying to fit together the pieces. “I went to Minnesota. I took Abigail. We went to Minnesota. She didn’t come back.”

You swallow and then extend your hand, delighted despite everything when he takes it, pulling him up. “Show me.”

He doesn’t notice your hand on his waist, gently steering him inside. The muscles shift under the t-shirt, firm and smooth. You want to curl your fingers and dig them in.

You gently but firmly push him towards the armchair in the study instead. He sinks into the armchair with a sigh, his skin in goosebumps. You hesitate for a moment and then go back into the living room, letting the dogs out before retrieving one of the extra blankets. He pulls it tightly around himself when you put it onto his shoulders, his head lowered. You look up at the kitchen, wondering if he will realize at some point that you have not spoken much, not needing any further cues.

No matter.

No one will believe him anyways.

The ear is perfectly preserved, sitting in between bile and several Aspirin, the smell disgusting, sour and metallic somehow. The drug you gave him will have worn off by now, destroyed by the chemicals in his stomach. Nothing to find.

You look back at him and he starts talking haltingly, trying so hard to find the truth. “I don’t remember going to bed last night. But I must have. Maybe I got up to let the dogs out and I…”

You interrupt him, not wanting him to dwell on the inconsistencies. “When did you last see Abigail?”

He doesn't hear you, mumbling on. "I woke up and my feet were muddy."

You push some force into your voice, calling his name loudly. "Will! When did you last see Abigail?"

He looks up, slightly confused, stumbling through the words. "Yesterday. At her father's cabin. I… had an episode. She… said something was wrong with me. She was afraid of me. She ran away."

And right into your arms. From the one with encephalitis to the one with something much worse.

You push on, trying to lead him a bit, snapping to the only for you interesting detail. "What happened? Why was she afraid?"

He looks up, his eyes wide, something stirring in them. "I hallucinated. I hallucinated that I killed her. But it wasn't real. I know it wasn't real."

Elation rushes through you and you yearn, YEARN to take a look through his blood, to see what he saw. And… you can smell it. He is terrified and angry and confused but underneath… there, underneath is something else. You swallow, hiding your terrible delight, swearing to yourself that you will cultivate this. Somehow. You look down at the ear and then turn away, inhaling deeply when he cannot see you, savoring the slight tang of arousal in the air. You complete the circle, your face a sad impression of concern and return to him, kneeling down next to him. The encephalitis is smiling sweetly once more, mixing addictively. You lower your head, infusing your voice with sadness, before locking eyes with him. "Will. We have to call Jack Crawford. You can't run from this. It will only make things worse."

You see the hope break in his eyes and it hurts, physically.

You push the words out. "Get dressed."

******

He retreats to the bathroom to put on his clothes, needing a moment to himself.

It gives you the perfect opportunity to seal his fate, planting the evidence they will need, without the dogs trying to inspect them as potential toys.

It had been fun tying the lures, putting in pieces of Marissa Schuur, Georgia Madchen, Cassie Boyle and your old friend, Donald.

You refuse to acknowledge that your hand is shaking now. And then you wait, your mind trained on his heart, stumbling in panic upstairs.

Hate at having to do this festers in your gut.

******

It doesn't make sense.

Reality shifts in and out of focus, the words exchanged with Beverly echoing in Will's brain. The floor of the lab is cold, prickling the soles of his feet. All the evidence is there.

Everything they need.

Will swallows, his mind racing. Panic rises but he swallows it down, turning towards the door in an aborted movement, stopping himself before he can really complete the motion. Reaching for Hannibal will not help at all, will it. Will frowns, blinking rapidly when Beverly gives him one of the orange overalls, bending down to unlock the chains around his feet. She clears her throat and her heels click as she walks over two steps, echoing, the sound shifting for a moment to the sound of hooves, and Will gasps for air, trying to figure out why this seems important, somehow. She turns away in an illusion of privacy and Will puts the cloth up to his face, inhaling deeply, trying to ground himself.

The world drops away for just an instant, making Will feel desperately alone, bile rising.

His headache returns and he sobs, once, forcing his emotions down with an effort. His limbs shake and the chain rattles as he unfolds the jumpsuit, focusing on every motion, the world tinged in surreal.

******

'I haven't given up on Will.'

You had thought that discussing half-truths with Bedelia might have a calming influence but all it does is leave a bitter aftertaste in your mouth.
Oh, Abigail impacted your life, yes. By extension.
And will continue to.

You snarl, the anger in your gut not appeased by the tears you made yourself shed.
You wonder if Lucille will laugh at you.
Your hand twitches in something you do not dare to name anticipation. You turn towards one of the hideouts on a whim, your lips twitching when you see the cars parked in front of the huge building. The heavy doors open soundlessly and you step down the stairwell, the damp, coppery air receiving you, the candles giving off a slight musky tang mixed with peach, making you frown in distaste. Filippo and his stupid tastes.

Your anger shifts, suddenly and viciously, targeting, focusing. You stomp downstairs, dropping your coat behind you, carelessly on the stairs. Filippo looks up, laughing with two others, recognizing your state of mind immediately, his eyes flaring up, challenging. He always is open for a sparring. His guests flee, too young to stand a chance, just as you jump, full speed, your fingers ripping his jugular out. The blood coats you, its hot spray doing nothing to soothe the fire in your gut. He is four decades your junior and not pure blood, his master a decadent idiot, turned to get at his riches. It made him ferocious in ways you sometimes need. His fist hits you in the chest, the ribs in it cracking, making you grin, your teeth fully extended. Your other hand lashes out, ripping off half his face and you hook your fingers in his jaw bone, pulling him near, bending down to feed. His hands come up to claw at your back but you don't care, pulling his strength by big draughts, the inflicted wounds on your back healing almost immediately.

Your phone vibrates and you rear back, growling, pushing him far away from you. He crumbles to the ground, coughing and cackling, cursing at you, viciously. You hiss at him and he quiets, your voice shaking when you answer. "Yes, Jack."
You close your eyes, letting his words rush over you, promising to be at your office later for a quick feedback meeting. You open your eyes again when the line clicks, working your jaw until you can find the strength to retract your teeth, eyes shifting to Filippo. You inhale sharply through your nose, your voice brooking no argument. "Get rid of these disgusting candles, Filippo."

You swallow, turning towards the stairs and the two nervous shades there, huddled together.
You grind your teeth, your voice curt. "And you may call unto a favor of mine."
You turn away, the dry, gurgling laughter following you, the words dripping between wet hiccups, slurred where the lips are still healing. "Oh, I will, Hannibal. I always collect those."
He snorts, droplets of blood coating the floor in front of him. "I can hardly wait to hear what Lucille says to this…"
You snarl quietly and snatch your coat from the young Vampire who holds it out to you at arm's length, feeling not an iota more relaxed, your whole system vibrating with energy.

Back in the car you try to calm yourself and reach for him but all there is is static. You look in the mirror, quietly congratulating Jack for having cut the rejuvenation process short, something that wouldn't have fit so well into your current life anyway.
Something you should keep in mind if you want to do this still.

Your fingers drum on the steering wheel.

******

His voice echoes in the room, his gaze too kind, too sad, too disappointed. It settles deep in Will's stomach, churning there, with something he is unable to name.

"You're sick, Will."

No shit, Sherlock. Will frowns lightly, refusing to dwell on all the possible meanings of 'sick', his mind clicking somehow. He remembers the way Alana was almost relieved earlier when she made him do the stupid grounding exercise. Something tickles his mind, something half remembered, just out of reach. He swallows, pushing the thought away and the words forward. "I wasn't consistent with taking my antibiotics. My fever came back."

Jack sighs through his nose and Will can feel himself falling, the ground giving away, nonetheless listening closely. "We're going to move you to a secure medical ward where we will find out what's wrong with you. And get you the treatment you need."

Will almost laughs, his voice dry, hysteria threatening. "And then what? Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane? Have Chilton fumbling at my head?" He swallows, knowing what's coming and hoping and dreading nonetheless.

Jack's tone is dry, flat, echoing as he walks slowly around. "This job doesn't generally lend itself to optimism. I desperately want to be optimistic about an alternative to what every fiber of evidence is telling me you did."

The words jam themselves into Will's gut, pushing up the bile. He can feel his resentment grow at them too, proverbial hackles rising, acid coloring his words. "I can't confess to something I don't remember." He refuses to look directly at Jack, seeing the set of his jaw just fine from the corner of his eyes.

"Question is, how much more is there that you don't remember?" Will looks at him then, silent as Jack continues. "We found your fishing lures."

Well, yes? Spite colors Will's response. "I should hope so. They were on my desk next to the front door."

Jack pushes his fists onto the table, his presence filling up the whole room, words reverberating, each word a punch into Will's stomach. "We found human remains in the materials you used to make them. Cassie Boyle. Marissa Schuur. Donald Sutcliffe. Georgia Madchen."

What? The ground drops away once more, dread settling deep in Will's gut. It cannot be. "No. I wasn't sick when Cassie Boyle was murdered. I wasn't sick when Marissa Schuur was murdered."

Jack frowns, shaking his head just a bit. "That's not an argument you want to be making right now. Not to me."

Too bad. Will pushes the feeling of dread forward, molding it into something sharp resembling anger, heavy on sarcasm suddenly. "Because then I'd be a psychopath." 'Like the ones I track down.' It's sitting on Will's tongue and something clicks once more, something coming together. Not yet fully graspable, but it's there, forming, like smoke swirling into a picture.

Jack emphasizes the words, tone flat. "My biggest fear is learning you knew what you were doing all along."

Will forces the lump in his throat down, ignores the thrum of recognition of something, refusing to dwell on the possibility that Jack could be right. It can't be. Not with Marissa Schuur. Something tickles in the back of his brain and he latches onto it this time, a little voice breathing 'and what was new in your life then? Jack was…. Alana wasn't but… HE was as well.' It's like a click that something else fits, something that makes him sure suddenly. At least of this, at least of himself. He forces a little smile, his words sardonic. "Don't have to be afraid of that Jack. But there is something you should be afraid of and that's whoever is doing this to me."

"Someone is doing this to you? Is this what this is? A set up?" Jack's voice is exhausted suddenly and Will almost sneers, recognizing the unwillingness and yet pushes, the words pouring out, now that they make sense. "They'll be close to you. It could be someone here. Working with you. They know the cases. They know forensics. They know I'm unstable." His mind reels. It had to be someone who came with them, who decided things with them, supported them. The possibilities narrow down, the smoke condensing, swirling, shaping out in his mind. Jack wasn't always there, he was indisposed in court in one instance at the very least. Disposed behind his desk at other times. Time slows, Jack's words punching into Will's mind.

"Do you hear how paranoid you sound?"

Will refuses to react too much, his thoughts hammering. 'Yes, and he made sure of it that you wouldn't be believed, too.' The thought is so clear it is frightening, and yet Will knows it would make no sense to voice it, smiling bitterly at the sheer effectiveness of the manipulation. And yet… something in him refuses to believe, refuses to accept the realization, the implications. Why would he do this? It hurts and he rejects the feeling, protecting the wound. Spite makes him throw the words at Jack, his mind running in circles. "Or it could just be you. Then I'm pretty much screwed, aren't I?"

Jack huffs and sighs through his nose, shaking his head. He settles down across from Will, leveling him with a sad and yet determined gaze. “I wanted to be… I wanted to be the one who did this.” He pauses and Will raises his head, his mouth dropping open, throat dry. This is it. “Will Graham, you are under arrest for murder. You have the right to remain silent.” Will closes his eyes, his heart stumbling for a beat, before picking up speed, panicked and frightened.

His mind circles on the question that remains, now that he has identified who.

Why?

His heart seizes harshly and he blinks, knowing he needs to get to the bottom of this, needs to find the truth. Needs. But he cannot reach out now, can he. His world narrows down to every breath he takes, loud and noisy in the fog of his mind. The killers he knows rush by and he picks what he needs, preparing himself even as he is manhandled outside, so very calm and collected, shoulders slumped, no need to be pushed. He cannot escape from the interrogation cell after all. He ignores Jack and gets into the caravan without prompting, the world fading to a backdrop as they leave the institute for prison. Will lets go only then, the impulses controlled and vicious, easily executed and almost practiced, his mind knowing exactly what to do, his body following the orders willingly, glad to get rid of the pent up energy.

It’s almost too easy.

Will gasps when it’s over, forcing the cold and yet putrid hatred down, way down, down where he does not have to face the direction it is aimed at, his shaking hands turning the van around.

Towards -him-.

******

Alana is so forcefully trying to make you feel bad. Needing to blame someone.

Well, you cannot really tell her you are indeed the correct person to blame, can you.

It’s a good thing you are prepared though, the clock you can show them perfectly faked by the coven chronologist to give the final push.

So easy. You just confirm their thoughts and fears and present enough remorse to seem contrite.

The facade breaks as they leave, hate at having to do this pouring out of every pore.

And then a thrum and a tug on your consciousness and you snarl in joy, almost vibrating with helpless pride. Giddy with anticipation.

He's coming.

******

You make sure to go to the bathroom just as he arrives. He enters quietly, surely, steps easy and yet silent, ascending the ladder slowly. You wonder what he might want there and then ignore the thought, settling back down on the desk.

He watches you for long seconds, his gaze prickling on your skin.

He smells a bit differently, a citrus note of… something permeating his being. He is calm and you marvel at it, knowing you have to go through the motions and yet annoyed by this, wanting to congratulate him badly. You finally decide to acknowledge him, pretending to smell him only now, the seconds ticking away. And the window of opportunity closing with it. "Hello Will." You look up, wishing for his gaze but it is averted, flitting up to the windows. "How are you feeling?"

He doesn't look at you but something sharp enters his features, his voice low. "Self aware."

Oh. How very promising. You wonder if he feels regret. "You frightened Alana Bloom."

"She's confused about who I am." He shakes his head, sardonic steel dripping off his tongue. "Which I can relate to." He pauses, tilting his head towards you. Accusingly. "Are you confused about who I am?"

You refuse to be daunted though your heart picks up speed, delighted. He is challenging you. "I'm not confused. I'm skeptical." No you're not. "Meaning I'm willing to change my mind should the evidence change."

He weighs his head minutely, voice dark, knowing the answer already. “Do you believe I killed Abigail?”

Do you believe he could? Oh yes, the way he oozes with ill contained hunger for justice and revenge at this very moment he would be capable of almost anything. It comes off of him in waves, dripping down the landing.

It makes you want to smile. You answer instead. “I believe it’s entirely possible, if not nearly indisputable based on how you discovered her ear.”

This does not sit well with him, you can see his mind latching onto the implications. You silently curse to yourself that you didn’t press his teeth into the shell of her ear before you forced it down his throat. But then again, it is a delight to see him puzzle it out.

Maybe you should have given him some more clues.

“If it was just Abigail, I would have believed. I would have believed I got so far inside Hobbs’ head, I couldn’t get out.”

You avert your gaze, trying to keep calm, trying to present the facade. Your fingers itch to touch him. You confirm and deny at the same time, knowing it will spur him into action, daring to look up at him once more, unable to keep the admiration from your gaze. It’s a good thing his are closed. “But it wasn’t just Abigail.”

He pulls a slight grimace, his tone almost a loud whisper, forceful and true, his eyes reopening to finally look at you, instinctually knowing he can match your gaze. “I know who I am.”

“No.” You decide to impart some hard won knowledge, knowing it will fit your situation nicely. “All sense of who you are has been distorted by your illness. You know who you are in this moment. That isn’t always the case.” Especially not if the hunger hits and there is no Provider around. Your sense of self is always defined and distorted by the hunger that drives you after all. The blessing and the curse.

You wonder how it will define him when he is reshaped, reborn in your arms. Eventually.

He shakes his head lightly, sure of himself now. “I didn’t kill any of them. And… somebody…” He emphasizes it heavily and you lower your eyes, unable to keep them from flaring up in pride. “… is making sure no one believes me.”

You run your tongue over your teeth, keeping your eyes on the filtered sunlight. You crave more, more insight. You wonder if he would amendable to play with you. “If we’re to prove you didn’t commit these murders, perhaps we should consider how you could have.” You push yourself up and the light in your eyes down, only daring to gaze upon him as you stand. “And then disprove that.”

His gaze works it's way over to you, the dark gaze of a wounded animal, bleeding but feral, something shining through. You tilt your head and wait until he gets up, slowly walking over to the ladder on the other side of the room. You match his steps down below, waiting at the bottom of the ladder. It would be more polite to wait over at the other side of the room but of course you cannot bring yourself to do so.

He looks down at you, both hands on the rungs for a long moment, face impassive, eyes flitting over your skin, your eyes, staying on your mouth for a moment before he looks away, to the window. You frown but then dismiss the thought, nothing about you giving the preternaturalness away after all. Or does it. The thought dissipates as he climbs down, too close to you really, the cloth of your suits rubbing against each other, opposites in almost everything from clothing to looks, down to the very fiber of your skin.

He smells of sweat and tears and blood, the acidic backdrop of the pain of his dislocated thumb, the bitter tang of disappointment and fear mixing in involuntarily. He waits there, at the bottom of the ladder for a long moment, eyes averted now, the vein in his neck beating quickly.

You could push him forward, hold his hands and take him, right here, now. The desire slams through you, makes you ache, viciously and your hand twitches. His eyes raise to yours, slowly, locking his eyes with yours.

Aware.

It snaps you out of the daze, and you step back, inhaling shakily. He follows your movement before he lowers his head, his neck almost glowing in the low light, just a quick impression before he steps past you, lowering himself in his seat.

You blink, somewhat dumbfounded, unsettled for some reason, taking your seat across from him. You inhale, slowly, thankful that your voice is steady, at least. "If you are this killer, that identity runs through these events like a thread through pearls. Cassie Boyle would have been your first victim. You said her crime scene was practically gift wrapped."

He looks away, to the side, slowly pushing himself up. He walks over to your desk, gaze fixed and you wonder what he sees. You wonder if what he sees shows itself in his blood.

Your teeth ache.

"It told me everything I needed to know to catch Garret Jacob Hobbs." His eyes gaze at the back wall of the room now, still focused. You want. "You'd seen one of Hobbs' victims, you knew how he killed. You may have been exploring how he killed to better understand who he was."

He refutes this thought immediately. "I wasn't in Minnesota when Cassie Boyle was murdered."

It's almost unfortunate you can destroy this argument so easily. "She disappeared on a Saturday. Found on a Monday. You would've had the weekend to do your work." And you had needed the whole weekend to find a suitable stag head in the vicinity, too. Ironic, really.

He shakes his head, words almost hissed. "I know I didn't kill her."

You smile, unseen behind him. "How do you know?" Your voice takes on an almost dreamlike quality, allowing yourself to remember. "What did you thing when you first met Marissa Schuur? How much like Abigail she was? Same height, same weight, same hair color, same age."

His head tilts, something beyond cynicism coloring his tone, dripping heavy off his tongue. "How could I resist?"

You narrow your eyes, wondering if he is mocking you. How delightful. "So much like his daughter, you may have wondered why Garret Jacob Hobbs didn't kill her himself. Dr. Sutcliffe wasn't killed how Garret Jacob Hobbs killed. He was murdered how you imagined yourself murdering a woman only days before." 'And did you like?' you want to ask but he interrupts your thoughts, correcting your reasoning.

Clever boy.

"How Georgia Madchen killed. She said she dreamt I killed Sutcliffe. But she couldn't see my face." A gasp and he presses the words out, bravely. "And then she was murdered." He turns to you on the last words, looking back over his shoulder.

Your pulse quickens. Your give him some truth, always best to hide snares after all. "You catch these killers, Will, by getting into their heads. But you also let them into yours." You yearn to be let in. And you are not above a plea. "I'm trying to help you, Will."

He gasps again, his eyes unseeing on the far wall, flitting around. Wide. A shiver of elation colors his scent and you inhale discreetly trying to figure out what he just saw. What he just figured out.

He stumbles back, falling into his chair with a rushed exhale, his hands clenching on the arm rests. He stares at you and you look back, letting him look, wanting him to see. He rips his gaze away suddenly and closes his eyes, breathing heavily.

Your hands clench in your lap.

"Then take me back to Minnesota. I want to see where Abigail died."

A shiver runs through your limbs and your muscles lock for a moment, anticipation settling heavily in your gut.

******

You drive the Bentley up and around the house, parking it right next to the back entrance. You wait until there are no heartbeats around anymore before ushering him into the car, clad in one of your more casual jackets, looking very much forward to driving with him. Smelling him.

It will take over 15 hours though. You are glad there is a bottle of blood in your trunk.

The road flies by and he almost vibrates besides you, overwrought and nervous, not calmed very well by the classical music you put on.

His smell permeates everything.

It makes your mouth water.

Just to drive is more difficult than you anticipate.

After three hours he asks for a stop and you watch him disappear behind the trees to relieve himself, rest stops out of the question of course. You check your phone and see the messages, Jack, Alana and Robertas all vying for your attention.

You put the phone on silent but turn the tracker on.

You don't want some downstate swat team tracking you down after all. Jack will suffice.

When he returns you smile at him, watch as his lips twitch in an helpless echo. Well, whatever this will be, it will and already does affect both of you. You turn back onto the road and hear his neck pop, deciding. You concentrate and then push with full force, watching his eyes go wide in the reflection of the window before they close, the induced sleep taking hold. Your hands clench on the steering wheel for a long moment, trying to control the hunger, the power needed just now burning a lot of energy.

You slow down again, and park uncaringly on the side of the road, bending over to lower his seat a bit, knowing he will be out of it for hours now. You pull the blanket from the back seat forward, placing it over him and reminding yourself to remove it again before you wake him up later. Your hands brush over the gun he hides in the pocket of the prison suit, cold and heavy. You debate whether you need to take his bullets.

But then there is no real need, this metal not relevant.

The rise and fall of his chest is hypnotic and you push yourself up and out with shaking hands, very glad that you packed such a fine vintage for emergencies.

It helps.

Though you catch quite a few weird looks from the other drivers as they go by, staring disbelievingly at the wine bottle in your hand.

You almost wished one of them would stop.

The blood in the bottle is cold after all.

******

You wake him after you have uprighted his seat again, folded the blanket away. You use your voice to push him out of the trance-induced sleep, calling softly.

“Will.” Awareness touches your mind and you marvel at it, delighted that he responds so well. Once more. “Will.”

He opens his eyes slowly and he blinks, once, unfazed, not looking at you, the moon bathing his skin in silver. You watch him get out of the car slowly, walking haltingly but determined, shoulders slumped and yet squared, a weird juxtaposition of contradictions, all rolled into one.

His hair is a mess and you want to run your hands through it, pull out the knots.

You follow his steps instead.

He enters the living room, observing the past in the dark, his eyes flitting around. He turns to you, his jaw set, his tone vaguely mocking. “Are we going to reenact the crime?”

You tilt your head, wanting to know what else he remembers. “If that would help you.” He looks at you, something like disappointment in his gaze.

It’s unsettling that this is unsettling you.

You watch im observe the pattern you created with Abigail, look for traces of meddling. Thankfully Robertas was careful. And thankfully it is old blood now, not very enticing. You

cannot help it, your voice carrying a hint of amusement. “It’s as if Abigail was supposed to die in this kitchen.”

He doesn’t look at you, his eyes trained on the blood splatters. Analyzing. “Her throat was cut. She lost great gouts of blood and there’s an unmistakable arterial spray…”

He points to the far wall and you interject, not looking at him. “They haven’t found her body.”

“Just the one piece.” It’s whispered and you continue unfazed, poking some more. “If you were in Garret Jacob Hobbs’ frame of mind when you killed her, they may never find her body.”

His voice is dark. “Cause I honored every part of her?”

Easy now. You can feel a tingle in your bones. “Perhaps you didn’t come here looking for a killer.” You turn away from the blood, looking at him, his profile sharp in the cold light. “Perhaps you came here to find yourself. You killed a man in this very room.”

He turns towards you as you speak, his eyes averted. His head snaps back forward when you have finished speaking, and you file the information away for later analysis, something in you telling you this is important. He grates the words out, something triumphant entering his tone, contradicting his words. “I stared at Hobbs and the space opposite me assumed the shape of a man filled with dark and swarming flies.” A small pause, strength entering the words. He throws you a quick look, paired with a brittle smile. “And then I scattered them.”

Your heart thuds and you suddenly know, you KNOW that he knows that you killed Abigail, know that he will not back down. You decide to honor this knowledge, giving him truth, slowly walking over to him, needing to be near. “At a time when other men first see and fear their isolation, yours has become understandable to you. You are alone because you are unique.” ‘Just as I am’ you wish to scream, swallowing down the urge, only to be floored by his words.

“I’m alone as you are.”

YES.

Your heart rate kicks up speed, the words coming by themselves now. Imploring. “If you followed the urges you kept down for so long, cultivated them as the inspirations they are, you’d become someone other than yourself.” ‘Other than your current self’.

Become, Will.

He inhales shakily, everything in him gathering for the truth. “I know who I am.” A pause and then he presses on, so utterly brave. “I’m not so sure I know who you are anymore.” He turns to you and you cannot help it, your gaze drops to his mouth. You ignore the hand that reaches for his gun, the shape of his lips much more important.

“But I’m certain one of us killed Abigail.”

Not quite. You watch his mouth move, twitching with elation and disdain, his teeth flashing for just an instance. More truth. “Whoever that was killed the others.” You finally tear your eyes away again, raising them up to his eyes.

His pupils widen and he raises his gun, trained directly at you. You blink, feigning to be surprised a bit, walking sideways to the door. Watching him turn with you. “Are you a killer, Will?” You look him up and down, watch as fierce determination enters his features, makes them even sharper. “You. Right now. This man in front of me. Is this who you really are?

He answers you, unyielding. “I am who I’ve always been.” He swallows, almost smiling, his gaze locked with yours. “Scales have just fallen from my eyes.”

His heartbeat kicks up, perspiration making his skin glisten. You want to run your tongue over it.

“I can see you now.”

He whispers it but it punches into your stomach, bone deep elation and doubt warring in your guts. How much does he see? You have to know. “What do you see?”

He wets his lips. “You called here that morning. Abigail knew. You kept her secrets until… until what, she found out some of yours?” He is angry now, fire entering his gaze.

You look down at the gun, almost smelling the gun powder already. “You said it felt good to kill Garret Jacob Hobbs, Will. Would it feel good to kill me now?”

He shakes his head a bit, his skin shaking as well. But there is something else there, something shining through. Sass. He’s making fun of you. “Ahhh, Garret Jacob Hobbs was a murderer. Ware you a murderer, Dr. Lecter?”

You concentrate hard on not smiling, unable to keep your features from softening. Alone here, with a serial killer, without backup and he is not afraid, only excited. You want to hear it all. “What reason would I have?” You blink, irritated when the door opens below, Jack’s heartbeat entering the house. Not yet, dammit.

He is shaking now, the elation and anger toppling over into despair, betrayal coloring his tone. You try to keep your features neutral but it hurts, his eyes glassy.

“You have no traceable motive, which is why you were so hard to see. You were just curious what I would do. Someone like me.” His voice gains some strength again, words pushed out. “Someone who thinks how I think. Wind him up and watch him go.” He juts his chin forward, his throat in beautiful relief. “Well apparently, Dr. Lecter, this is how I go.” He raises his gun and you yearn for him to pull the trigger, yearn for the hole in your head that would end this game, that would force your hand beyond any other considerations. Would force you to kill Jack and to take him with you.

“Will! Easy.”

You clench your teeth, furious suddenly, a mask of indifference pasted onto your face. Will lowers his gun a bit and you lock eyes with him, ignoring Jack. Will's gaze flits back and forth between you before locking with yours again, deep betrayal open in it. You silently curse Jack.

Will hesitates and then pulls his gun up nonetheless, Jack's shot ringing loud in the small kitchen.

You whip your head to the side, watching the droplets of blood fly, knowing you wouldn't be able to help yourself if his blood would coat your mouth.

******

The man-eater stands behind Jack, towering over him and somehow layered over Hannibal, pitch black and gaunt. Hannibal's, no -his- gaze is intense, red flecks in them, matching the blood from Will's aching shoulder. Aching is an understatement really, but right now Will is ignoring it, inconsequential to finally seeing. He doesn't even reach for the gun, his eyes trained on Hannibal, his skin prickling with the otherworldliness, watching as Hannibal does not even reach up to dab at the blood, something a normal human would have done. 'Because he knows where every droplet of blood in this room is.' Will wants to scream, his mind racing and yet sluggish, aware of a huge breakthrough and yet emotionally exhausted, knowing Jack won't believe him. He decides to let Hannibal know at least, echoing deliberately, his voice mimicking.

"See? See?"

******

Jack sighs. Will's eyes are on you and finally seeing, his eyes dark. And he lets you know.

Wants you to know that he knows.

It's invigorating. Promising.

And unsettling.

It makes you desperately hungry.

You lick your lips, small droplets of his blood everywhere, the smell thundering through you. Lighting in your veins. Too bad that Jack is here. Your teeth ache so profusely it almost hurts.

He shifts on the floor in front of you, trying to relieve the pressure against his shot shoulder. Jack steps forward and it takes all the willpower you possess to not intervene, watching him cuff Will with plastic strips this time. He pulls him up and your hands twitch, the moan that is torn from Will at the jarring motion traveling through you. Your gut clenches.

The world throbs in red and your mouth drops open slightly.

Will pushes himself up and you lock eyes with him, the world dropping away for an instant. They are wide, taking you in, dropping to your mouth. Watching you lick at another droplet. Aware.

You almost moan out loud, your mind latching onto the fact as if drowning.

HE SEES.

How can it be?

You exhale shakingly and decide then, pushing and his eyes snap to yours, furious and aware once more, resisting and you have to increase the pressure until his mind yields, his body folding. The effort is substantial, impressive, really, driving home the fact that you will need to feed, and soon. You catch his fall and lower yourself with him, unable not to, his hair tickling against your neck. Jack sighs and you almost roll your eyes, hackles raised, deciding to verbalize what needs to be done. „Jack, please call for an ambulance. He is severely dehydrated and injured. I do not believe he will be a threat anymore.“

Jack nods quietly, taking out his phone and calling for the ambulance, sighing deeply again when he ends the call. You click your tongue, regarding him for a moment. „Jack, would you get a blanket from the car? There is one in the trunk of my Bentley, as well as a first aid kit.“

Jack nods, but bends down and retrieves Will’s gun, indicating him with it. „Will you be alright here, Dr. Lecter?“

You almost laugh but turn it into a thin smile. „I believe so. I would prefer to put something under his head before putting him down though. Please retrieve a pillow from the living room on your way back as well.“

Jack hesitates and then turns and you let your teeth drop, the relief instant but short lived, the need refocusing instantly. You close your eyes, daring to bend down to the bullet wound for a moment, the smell of gunshot powder very faint. The burned cloth and skin of the bullet entry underneath the coppery smell of flesh and blood make you salivate. There is something else there, so close to his armpit, something truly Will, and it makes you snarl quietly at the fact that you will not be able to get close again after this stolen moment.

Well, for a while at least.

You resign yourself to speaking with Lucille.

Soon.

You shift, his head falling back, exposing his neck and you bend down without a conscious thought, your hand shifting him so the siren's call that is his blood is within reach. Your tongue goes out and touches the blood oozing from the wound, the taste an electric shock to your system. Light explodes, the little drop dissolving in your mouth, fiery tendrils of want running through your system. An impression of dog's fur under your hand, there and gone again, the fact that something was carried on so small an amount astonishing.

You want. Desperately.

You must not.

It hurts to retract your teeth, and you close your eyes, hearing Jack return. You lower Will down when he bends down and places a pillow on the floor, Will's still form between us. Jack looks at you, wearily. „You may want to wash up Dr. Lecter, they will be here soon."

You nod and then get up, the little bathroom just down the hall. You dab some water on the the bloody freckles, your skin sucking it up within seconds, tingling. Sirens sound and you look at your reflection in the glass, your eyes glowing red. You snarl and then concentrate, suppressing, until the red is all but gone, your body vibrating with need.

You smile, grimly.

******

You have Jack take Will to the hospital, suddenly sure that the Encephalitis has to be cured now. It wouldn't do to damage his brain after all, especially if he sees now.

In fact, that would be tremendously stupid.

You had hoped you would be able to attend to him unobserved but Jack joins you and there really isn't much you can do about it. Inconsequential and oblivious banter. You amuse yourself with planning ahead instead.

And having some fun with your Provider. It would be amusing to pretend to feed her Abigail.

Your stomach growls and your teeth pulse.

Time to go for groceries.

******

In the end they move him to the BSHCI after only a few days in the hospital.

You know you should probably stay away a bit longer but you cannot.

Being seen is addictive.

And you do miss him.

You close your eyes as you enter the cell block, smiling softly to yourself, his scent drafting over already. You school your features back towards neutral and walk down the corridor, glad he is alone down here. You stop in front of his cell, watching him sit there unmoving, hands clasped. And yet.

You know he has sensed you, a thrumming awareness between you.

It's a shame that Frederick is listening in.

Your lips twitch and you opt for something simple. "Hello, Will."

He pushes himself up, calm and collected, fully aware. His hair is like a dark halo, wild and messy. He steps close, raising his head slowly, obviously collecting himself. When your eyes meet his are full of anger and betrayal, mixed with swirling darkness and iridescent intellect. "Hello, Dr. Lecter."

You cannot help but smile, watching his eyes glitter. You look down for a moment, voice kind. "Is there anything I can help you with here, Will? I mean, I cannot interfere with the investigations of course, but if there is anything you need?"

He scoffs, his eye teeth glinting for a moment when he pulls a grimace, his tone sardonic and yet calm, light. Beyond sarcastic. "Oh, I have everything I need right here, thank you Dr. Lecter. Of course everything else I could need is nothing you can provide, is it."

You blink, irritated at the 'can'. You click your tongue, forcing amusement. "What makes you think I cannot?"

Will smiles, widely, before stepping back towards the bunk. “I… recognize when things are not within one’s powers…” He sinks down onto the bunk with a sigh, head lowering and eyes closing. Ignoring you.

You mull over his words, jaw working, your anger rising. However and why-ever he thinks you are not in control… ‘But then you really aren’t, are you’ whispers a treacherous little voice in your brain and you force yourself to stay calm, sudden fury at the whole situation settling in your gut.

You turn abruptly and walk back, his voice carrying after you.

“Just make sure the dogs are well cared for.”

There is no ‘please’ offered and you gnash your teeth, proud and pissed off at the same time.

You recognize an order when you hear one after all.

You call Alana from your car.

He really is perfect.

You will not let -her- interfere anymore.

If she finds out that he knows already, she will kill him.

******

The fledgling’s throat rips like paper under your hands, your mouth descending to gulp down her blood in big draughts, uncaringly messy. You rip her head off, dropping it there on the floor. Time is of the essence after all.

You hurry down the hallway afterwards, your hand clenching on the silver knife in your hand, one of the few weapons that can slow your healing down. And therefore actually hurt your kind.

For a while at least.

A small draft and her fist hits you in the chest like a hammer, your bones cracking. Her eyes are glowing, fangs fully extended, fury etched into her face. Well, it's not every day a coven master gets attacked. Actually it's been unheard of in the last few decades. You fall to the ground but manage to hurl the knife towards her, watching her slap it away, skin hardly scratched. It falls to the ground a few meters away, the sound almost tinkling.

She laughs at you and then steps forward, her heel pressing down into your chest. "What is this going to be, Hannibal? You know I am much stronger than you. Are harboring a death wish?"

You growl and then try to lift her foot off, futilely. Lucille sighs dramatically, her tone bordering on regretfully playful. "Ah such a shame, Hannibal. And why? I didn't interfere -that- much with your plans?"

"You interfered enough." It's not the whole truth but close enough. No use having you on video saying you would risk the coven and the whole world if you can save him.

She tilts her head, her eyes narrowing, obviously wondering. "You do know attacking the coven master results in the death of the attacker and their descending line."

You snarl up at her, the words coming with a hiss through your dropped teeth. "Only if the coven master survives. Otherwise the right of the stronger is employed."

Lucille gapes a you for a moment and then starts to laugh in big heaving bellows, holding her sides. She wipes at a tear, sniffing, ending in giggling. "And how, pray tell, Hannibal, will you master my strength?" She moves her heel to Hannibal's throat, ripping through cloth and skin in the process. You gasp, drawing breath painful but needed to voice the words so you force yourself through the lancing pain, grinding them out. "I will only need to wait."

She frowns, blinking rapidly, her head whipping around for others, but you only grin grimly, knowing your only support is simply watching through the video cameras.

You see the exact moment it clicks, her movements freezing for a moment. You smile wolfishly and her heel disappears, clicking over to the wall and the mirror mounted there. She curses as she sees the blue lines spread from the little scratch, albeit slowly. She whirls around, her many pearls flying and clicking together. "What did you put onto that knife, Hannibal?"

You push yourself up slowly, trying to smooth down your torn clothes, buying time. Hope is a fickle thing and she won't kill you while she thinks there might be an antidote. Still, you have no mind to lie to her. "Something I created myself. I harvested the poison of cone snails that I breed in my basement. I mixed two different families together and … discovered its effects on our kind by accident." You smile, pushing yourself up slowly. "I believe you remember Lilly? The fledgling that disappeared last year? Well, she gripped that flask a bit too hard when she was nosing around in my house for you. There is no cure."

Lucille hisses at you, gripping her arm. “You said she had returned. You provided video proof you little liar.” She shakes her head, growling to herself. “And I had to compensate her master…” She draws herself up, grimacing. “If you think I will just sit here and wait for it to kill me, you are delusional. I’ll just ask one of the guards to chop off my arm and then have the Breeders grow me a new one.”

There is a thrum of displayed air and then Robertas voice sounds, tired and yet determined. “No you won’t. I’m sorry, Lucille.”

She lashes out but he catches her arms, just holding them. She sneers and then recoils as much as she can, her words filled with venom. “Oh, so this is how it is? Family over Loyalty. You are a poor example of a friend, Robertas.”

Robertas nods, gravely before he sighs, his tone calm. “I am. But I would hate to be an even worse Uncle, especially now, that he seems to finally have found his match.” His right hand snaps up, the crack sounding ugly and vicious, Lucille’s head falling back at an awkward angle. Robertas drops her, sighing deeply before turning to you.

You smirk, indicating the fallen coven master with a tilt of your head. “Impulse control, Uncle.”

Robertas shrugs lightly, gaze a weird mix of sorrow and excitement. “Now we only have to wait.” He eyes you with a calculating gaze, just a tad amused. “Is there really no cure?”

You tilt your head. “Why do you ask?”

Robertas clicks his tongue. “Because, Hannibal, you have here a very old coven master at your disposal. With very old, powerful blood. Rejuvenating blood. You really want to tell me you haven’t thought of it.”

You sigh a bit and then grin, pulling out the little flask from your pocket. “It’s a good thing I never really lied to her before. Even when I told her the little fledgling who … discovered this had left I didn’t, for she was already leaving on a cargo ship. In little boxes of course. But this way Lucille never had any reason to doubt me.”

Robertas hums, eyes narrowed and waves towards Lucille. You step forward, rubbing the antidote into the skin around the wound. It takes a while but the little blue lines disappear again, the antidote distributed via the still beating heart. You sigh through your nose, shrugging. “I brought the equipment from the cliff house with me. I will go get it.”

You rush to your car and back, the short burst of speed fully worth it in your opinion. Robertas sets up the drainage and you both watch the red liquid drop into the bottles, brilliant ruby, carrying power.

It’s mesmerizing.

Her blood fills 6 bottles, her heart stopping just as the last one is filled. Robertas bends over and closes her eyes, sighing again. He shoots a look at you that says it all and you incline

your head, well aware that you are even deeper in his debt now. You frown, clicking your tongue, the words coming haltingly. “Is there anything I might offer you in return, Uncle."

Robertas raises his eyebrow, a sly expression entering his features. “I thought you’d never ask.”

He grins and you suddenly know, your expression turning sour. His smile widens and he continues, amusement clear in his tone. “I will take over the coven. As the new coven master I will do my utmost to protect you… all. And besides, -you- have your hands full, do you not?”

You swallow, furious and thankful at the same time, lips pressing together. Robertas takes the bottles with blood and puts them into a crate, which he picks up. “Here. Take three of these to the cliff house for… later. You never know. And take some groceries for Abigail and Miriam as well. They’ve almost run out.”

You step over and take the crate, looking down at the husk that was Lucille, fallen in body in a heap on the floor. Robertas continues, unfazed. “I will prepare her and then display her in the coven hall, to erase all doubts.

You turn away, teeth grinding, picking up your knife on the way.

Robertas calls after you, words ringing. “Play the game Hannibal, but play their game. You got him into prison, now deal with it. Be part of the charade, but be careful. You hurt him and he knows now. And you don’t even know how -much- he actually knows.” He sighs, tone bordering on grumpy. “This has all the makings of a catastrophe in waiting.”

You step up and take the crate, your thumb smoothing over the label on the wine bottle.

You will seal the bottles at home.

A good vintage has to be shared.

Eventually.

Proof

Chapter Summary

Dealing the cards dealt. And working around them.

Chapter Notes

I know it's been ages - sorry.
I hit a serious writer's block on a scene and feedback and in combination with stress at work that didn't lend itself to much writing.
Next chapter is in the works already though!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It takes a while to bleach the meat, to soften it up. The ‘flounder’ had been frozen, keeping it fresh. When Jack comes over to the dinner you invited him to the little slices of different ‘fish’ sit there on your counter already, innocent and perfectly adapted.
You have to concentrate hard not to smile.

You push your mourning feelings at not being able to see Will right now up, transforming the feeling into a portrayal of contriteness, easily etched into your face. You have paired it with an almost white suit today, playing to Jack’s subconscious.

Jack doesn’t wait for you as he starts eating. Just a bit rude, isn’t it.
You decide to drive the guilt train a bit. And it is a loss, indeed.
There is something in Jack’s eyes though. “According to Will Graham this was all you.”

Indeed. And how right he is, too. No need to lie here. You amuse yourself a bit comparing Will to one of his canine friends. “Will Graham was your blood hound, you can’t ignore where he points.”

Something flat enters Jack’s tone. “I’m not ignoring it.”

Interesting. So Will’s behavior has been cause for enough doubt to offer grounds for inquiries. A part of you wants to seethe a ‘finally’ at Jack. You settle for pragmatic confirmation instead. ”You have to investigate me, it’s in my best interest. And yours.”

Jack nods and you continue the conversation on autopilot, your thoughts drifting away. You will need to visit the enforcers tonight, get a sample of the newly developed retroactive genome therapy, temporarily masking the differences to pure human DNA before you are

invited by Miss Katz. And you will need to clean all your suits, just in case. The white wine tickles your tongue.

Jack's bland statement reverberates in your skull as you clean up later, as you yearn, quietly. "We can't define Will… at all."

Good.

******

The dark, high class car, parked in front of the entrance of the nondescript house, is still warm when you pass it, the double doors opening silently. The entryway and hallway are dark, on purpose so. You walk in with measured steps, knowing your recent actions have thrown the local coven into extreme turmoil. It has been decades since the last forceful removal of a leader and for all intents and purposes -you- should be the one leading this coven now.
The fact that Robertas is… nullifies the reputation gain from the kill with a depressing certainty while also enabling coven members to be openly hostile towards you - if they dare. You click your tongue, knowing you are still among the older ones. And quite resourceful, as it has been shown after all. You watch a fledgling shrink back into the shadows, all wide eyes and flashing fangs, the hiss almost inaudible. The stubbled throat glinting in the low light for just a moment makes your mouth water.
You have to stay well fed after all. Genome therapy will drain your powers very fast, your body fighting against the changes constantly. Or so you heard. You sigh to yourself, turning the corner towards the labs slowly, not sparing the body of Lucille, displayed on a slab of stone to your left, one glance.
Light flares up as you push the heavy door open, reggae music branding up to you. The tables are littered with probes and specimens, vials and tubes. Dark red dots everywhere. It is beyond you how this work environment actually yields viable results. You silently congratulate yourself for choosing a… career outside the hospital and science. Who knows, maybe they would have drafted you to work for -him- if you hadn't. You grimace, flicking at a flake of dry blood.

The booming laugh makes you turn. "Ah, Hannibal, so happy to see you come by. Still squeamish I see?"
You paste a congenial smile onto your lips, try to keep the annoyance out of your voice. "Sebastian. I hope your studies come along well."
The huge vampire steps out of the shadows behind a cupboard with various lizard species, wiping his hands on a soiled cloth. He flings it over the back of a chair next to him, pushing his hands on his hips. He undulates, his back popping, the sound underlining the music somehow. He chuckles and you exhale slowly, trying to curb your impatience.
It would not do making him upset.
"I have heard your own studies yielded favorable results indeed. What a brilliant idea to try snail toxins on our kind…" He snorts, shaking his head slowly. "Lucille had… what is the expression? 'A good run'. Though, to be frank, I think she may have had you on a way too

long leash. You have always been trouble and she knew that." His green eyes flash, laugh booming again when he sees the expression you just cannot hide. "Ah, Hannibal, no worries. The games of covens have always been wholly uninteresting to me as you well know."
You incline your head, silently affirming. Making sure to keep your eyes on the floor. You are ruefully aware that Lucille was a lightweight compared to Sebastian, the whole place saturated with his presence. The air shifts and Sebastian's hand lands on your shoulder, jarring you. "It is always pleasing to find a youngling who still has manners." He chortles when your shoulders lock on 'youngling', squeezing harshly. "Everyone under 1000 is a youngling to me, Hannibal. If you make it beyond I will consider calling you fledgling." He roars again with a full belly laugh at the look you cannot contain, hitting your back so hard it truly hurts. You are amused despite yourself, slightly exasperated by the fact that someone as old as 'Sebastian' would not use his powers to rule. You look up, your eyes traveling over the long blonde hair, the distinct cheekbones. You wonder when he took up the name. What made him change his given one. The question dissolves on your tongue, this subject not a welcome one as you well know.
You clear your throat, letting your face show your mood. "I would like to ask a favor."
Sebastian turns, shooting a look at you over his shoulder while stirring in a deep green liquid with a glass spoon. The smell of it is vaguely familiar and you try to place it while he continues on. "You want the retroactive temporal genome therapy." He hums, turning the heat under the flask up a fraction. "It will only be effective for 48 hours. And your body will fight against it, the harder the older you are." He grins. "So it might be bearable."
You roll your eyes, knowing you may now that he has already informed you he is teasing. You click your tongue, sighing a bit dramatically. "Which is good. Is there something you would like in return?"
He turns, tapping his fingers on the table. His right hand comes up, tracing along the buttons of your jacket, while watching you closely. You hold your breath, keeping your expression impassive. His eyes narrow, lips twitching. "Nothing you are willing to give I see… saving yourself for him now?"
You blink, withdrawing an inch, unsettled suddenly. Your voice is rough, words stuck somehow. "We are conjoining. And he knows. It won't be long now."
Sebastian tilts his head, humming. "So I heard. I hope you are correct." His right hand lifts and his forefinger strokes along your lips, expression turning salacious for a moment. "Well, you know where to find me if you change your mind." He raises his eyebrows, pursing his lips. "In the meantime, if you would bring me one of your delicious kidney dishes at some point, it would be sufficient compensation."
You press your lips against his fingers for just a moment, knowing your eyes are burning red. "It will me my pleasure."
Sebastian grins and his teeth flash, before he steps back, opening a cabinet on the other side of the room. He takes out two syringes, offering them to you silently. You step up, taking them carefully, watching the blue liquid in them glitter in the light of the room.
"Inject yourself twice in 12 hours. It will drain you, and conversely make you ravenous. Make sure to time it right, re-application only works after a recovery period of 6 months. Won't be a very nice experience by the way."
You nod, carefully pocketing the syringes.

The green liquid puffs and Sebastian curses, hurrying past you to lower the heat beneath the flask again. He sighs, shrugging slightly. "Guess the curry burned." He shoots you a look, eyes crinkled. "I believe I'm not as good a cook as you are."

You stare, aghast, not trusting your tongue. Sebastian throws his head back and laughs again, waving you off and you turn and leave, his laughter following you back through the corridors.

The blue of the liquid in the syringes glows faintly in the dark, bathing you in surreal lighting.
Whispers follow you out, the yellow eyes of the guarding enforcers burning into your back.

******

The line flows through Will's fingers, too light and yet heavy, the lure at the end bright in the low light. The water is cold. Cleansing, swirling around him, always threatening to take him with it.
Will inhales, fresh air replacing the stale and dusty breaths reality forces upon him. He throws the line out again, his mind flitting around, trying to fit the pieces together. Something tugs at him and he looks up, searching, trying to squash the yearning he feels. The feathered stag steps up slowly, hesitantly, at a respectful distance. Slightly apologetic. In the shadows.

The shadows.
Will locks his eyes with it, the vague red hue of them changing their shape. The taste of copper and wine explodes on his tongue, an impression of taste and need, hidden behind sharp teeth. Will keeps their eyes locked, licking along the inner side of his teeth. The line tugs and the moment breaks, the vision fading with it, replaced by dull reality, Chilton droning on.
Will keeps his face passive, his heart beating wildly. He sifts through the emotions gained by the… exchange, it is an exchange. He frowns slightly, tasting the copper for a moment. The outcome is regretted. Will's jaw muscles lock for just an instant.
Well, it better be.

He refocuses on Chilton, redirecting his fury there.
For now.

******

You walk around the room, check for hidden surveillance, watching her fidget a bit from the corner of your eyes. As composed as she is, she is still thrumming, smelling of the enforcer's taint. Of course they would have informed her of the change in command. A change not all of them welcome.
And they would have informed her what this change means for you.
Free reign.
Well, almost.
"Will Graham has asked to see me. " You sit down, noting that she had drawn the blinds. It

makes you wonder if she knows you didn't drink much of Lucille's blood. And you haven't fed properly since then. Considerate. Only she never is without a goal. You blink. "I would like to see him. I continue to be curious about the way he thinks, despite all that's happened."
"He's still influencing you. Will Graham asking to see you betrays his clear intent to manipulate you."
The words sound a bit stilted. Your mind supplies the heavier accent to the words. Dearest Uncle… So he wants her to report to him. You inhale soundlessly, deciding to play her game. For now. "And if I agree to see Will?"
"It betrays your clear intent to manipulate him."
Manipulate… Play with…. Keep at you side forever. Your guts clench viciously, forcing the admission. "I miss him."
There's a smile on her lips now, calling you out. "You are obsessed with Will Graham."
If only it was an obsession. That you could have indulged in by now. But no, it had to be worse. You blink, a bit self deprecatingly, trying to deflect. "I'm intrigued."
"Obsessively. He's going to take advantage of that."
You are counting on it. Still, she is a bit too… high on her horse just now. Time to haul her back down a bit, "Will is my friend."
"Why? Why is he your friend?"
Ah. An honest emotion at last. She is genuinely puzzled, a much better fit for your tastes after all and already a provider. Jealousy emanates off of her in waves. You weigh your words carefully, knowing they will be reported somewhere. "He sees his own mentality as grotesque but useful, like a chair of antlers. He can't anticipate his thoughts. He can't block them. He can't repress who he is. There's an honesty in that I admire."
Her eyes flash, making you admire her spunk. "I imagine there's an honesty in that you can relate to." Desire to know, heavy in the air between you. Desire to receive what she was promised by the old coven leader. Desire for the pleasure it brings when she provides for you. Need, almost irrepressible, the tang tickling your tongue. "What can't you repress, Hannibal?"
Your lips twitch into a smile, looking away for a moment, considering. The sun filters through the blinds, low light, the last rays before sundown. You could visit him tonight. You don't really feel like taking provisions from her. But then it would not do to go hungry, would it. And taking what she offers to give might reassure her. And them.
An exhale and then you glide forward, silently on your knees, startling a gasp from her. Your hands push her legs apart, your tongue licking along the skin of her thigh, the cloth of her skirt pushed up by the movement. Her hands fly to your hair, messing it up, her hips canting up unconsciously already. You turn your head slightly and gently nuzzle close, knowing she prefers it this way, with gently flicks at intermittent intervals. She comes apart under your ministrations, and you make sure to take her high again before you let your teeth drop, sinking them into the vulnerable spot right there, pushing her over again and again, tongue and mouth and blood fusing into ecstasy.
You carry her upstairs after, make sure she is comfortable before you wash yourself in her bathroom. There are bloodstains on your shirt and you frown, taking a new one from the suitcase in the guest room. A good idea to put some into her home for after feeding.
You never know when you'd need one after all.

******

There's a tickling at the back of his skull, pushing, pulling, there and gone, impossible to ignore. Will sits on his cod, trying to pinpoint it. Trying to narrow the corresponding emotions down that rise with it, a yearning that is both weird and familiar, lush and irrefutable. Steps sound and the black stag tilts his head on the riverbank, red eyes gleaming. Will inhales and there it is, carried soundlessly on the promise of … something, stepping closer. Reality mixes with the vision and Will opens his eyes, unseeing on the hooves stopping outside the bars.
"Hello, Will."
The words pull him out of his mind, attention and yearning focusing on the… man outside of his cell. There is fury, too, but mostly ferocious interest, if Will is totally honest. And there is nothing much else to do, here, now, except trying to find the truth and being honest to oneself. He keeps his tone flat, watching the way Hannibal holds himself, turning his head away in a deliberate move. "Dr. Lecter."
It doesn't take long. It almost makes Will smile.
"Lost in thought?"
Will shakes his head in an aborted movement, truth and resolution seeping through, like honey through cracks, unstoppable and sticky. "Not lost. Not anymore." Questions run though his mind, the imagined words a deep timbre, rough and stilted. Echoed, somehow. Will licks along his teeth, deciding to throw it into Hannibal's face. Get a reaction. "I used to hear my thoughts inside my skull with the same tone, timbre and accent as if the words were coming out of my mouth." He keeps his eyes unfocused, watches as the sedate movement of Hannibal's clothes on his in- and exhales stops from the corner of his eyes.
"And now?"
Almost breathless. Interesting. A smile tugs on Will's lips, raising his head to shoot an almost smug look at Hannibal. "Now my inner voice sounds like you." Will watches the helpless softening of Hannibal's face, feels the echo in his own gut. Bitterness creeps into his tone, the brittle smile a vicious thing. "I can't get you out of my head." Will narrows his eyes, watching closely. Sees the hint of satisfaction creep over Hannibal's face, like a shadow, there and gone again.
"Friendship can sometimes involve a breach of individual separateness."
Breach… Somehow this resonates with Will. A breach of individual separateness is an interesting choice of words as well. A joining. But friendship… no. He pushes himself up from the bunk, energy rushing through him. Friendship is not what Hannibal wants after all and Will blinks, his voice trembling with the truth, pushing out. "You're not my friend. The light from friendship won't reach us for a million years. That's how far away from friendship we are." He's breathing heavily at the end, trying to force the nausea down. He watches as Hannibal backtracks a bit, but unrepentant.
"I imagine it's easier to believe I am responsible for those murders than it is to accept that you are."
The words come instead of clenching his teeth, the headache already forming behind Will's eyes nonetheless. "Sure is." Will watches as Hannibal licks his lips, his eyes hooded. The words seem like a code, twisting the meaning around.
"Your inner voice can provide a method of taking control of your behavior. Accepting responsibility for what you've done. Giving those thoughts words encourages clarity."
"I have clarity. About you." Will raises his eyebrows for effect, watches as Hannibal receives the non-verbal hint. He smiles harshly, wondering at his own thundering pulse, at the pull he feels. Memory flashes, overlays Hannibal's face with droplets of blood, with an otherworldly

stillness. Antlers rise in Will's mind. 'What exactly is he?' Something that needs to be hidden, normally. Something he shouldn't actually know about, for sure.
"Our conversations, Will, were only ever about you opening your eyes to the truth of who you are. "
Will feels the truth of this, steps closer for effect. Slowly. He mulls over the words for a moment, catching on 'who you are'… shouldn't it be 'who you could be?'. He locks eyes with Hannibal, watch as they drop to his mouth for just an instant, helplessly, before they snap back up. If he wanted Will, why did he set him up. Anger flares up, the sour taste of desire for revenge thundering through Will. "What you did to me is in my head and I'll find it. I'm going to remember, Dr. Lecter, and when I do, there will be a reckoning."
Hannibal smiles at Will, proudly and it notches Will's ire up, making him utterly sure suddenly that he needs to hold his ground here, must not give in into… whatever Hannibal wants him to submit to. Will's jaws lock, seething silently. Hannibal's words reach him as if from far away, reinforcing his resolution.
"I've got huge faith in you, Will. I always have…"
Will turns his back abruptly, refusing to step back into his cell though. He can feel Hannibal's presence like a torch, burning his body, brandishing waves of awareness, the pull between them almost tangible. There is a shift and a rustle and then a displacement of air and then the lights go out, with cursing being heard from the other side of the corridor. Will frowns, his motion to turn back around aborted as a hand materializes on his neck, a cold thumb brushing up his nape. Slowly. Goosebumps erupt and the fingers clench, pulling him a bit back, the thumb angling forwards, pressing against his carotid now, albeit gently. Will inhales, shudderingly and the hand unlocks on his shoulder, ghosting up his jaw to brush a curl behind his ear. A buzzer sounds and it is gone, tingling emptiness where it had been just moments before and Will blinks as the light flares back up, picking up annoyance from the… being behind him just fine.
Will turns his head just a bit, enough to see Hannibal watching him from the corners of his eyes. He watches as annoyance is replaced by stoic geniality, the mask slotting firmly into place again. 'Why' he wants to scream, the sheer fury a molten thing, stuck in his throat. Hannibal sighs through his nose and Will sneers at the sound, the words reaching him over the thundering in his ears, thick with regret, openly offered. "I will be back, Will."
Will narrows his eyes, flitting his gaze back and forth on the bricks in the wall. He listens as Hannibal turns, the click of his shoes turning to the sound of hooves once more, just before the door buzzer sounds.

******

Alana tries. Will tries to ignore the sinking feeling in his stomach, the screaming yearning for his dogs. He folds his arms against his chest, well aware of how it looks. At least Chilton cannot see him. He keeps his words careful, tailored to what she expects. At least he'll get a decent lawyer now. He swallows, a more sonore voice whispering in his mind for a moment. 'Not my imagination.' He latches onto Alana's wide and sympathetic eyes, his voice brittle. "Have you ever helped a patient recover memories?"
She blinks and Will smiles, painfully. He steps back, sits down on the bunk, the non-verbal

ask to set things into motion, while also refusing to budge on this. Alana hesitates for a few seconds before she nods, her heels clicking on the floor as she leaves for Chilton's office. Will closes his eyes, muscles in his shoulders locked, spine rigid. Hannibal whispers in the back of his mind and it is at once unsettling and relaxing, the mixture thoroughly disturbing. It takes forever.

Or at least that it what it feels like until the buzzer sounds again, orderlies gesturing for Will to step forward. The steel is cold on his skin, grounding. The clinking of the chains as he walks sounds like glass vials clinking together. Something flashes before his inner eye, a bag filled with medicinal vials and… syringes. There is some bile in his throat.

The buzzer sounds and Will climbs the steps slowly, trying to latch onto something more but nothing comes, the walk to the interrogation room too short for a truly spaced-out musing. He lets himself be locked to the table with a brittle wry smile, Alana's guilty and soulful eyes following the process. There's always guilt in them now and it harrows Will. There is a light metronome on the table and something tickles Will's mind, there and gone again.

Alana leans forward and Will follows her instructions mutely, concentrating on slowing his heartbeat, until the black guilt in Alana spreads, covering her, changing her into a black siren, floating between reality's hinges. She comes close, drawn by the yearning in Will and the sluggish tar burns Will's lips, dragging Will into the recesses of his mind.

Pwum.

The light of the metronome changes, the blue dining room illuminated for just a second before it fades into background lighting, the table laden with fruit and meat. And decoration. The clock on the mantlepiece takes up speed, softly clicking sounds rushing by as time speeds up, the food on the table spoiling with age as Will watches. He looks up as something falls apart, the being he saw at the Hobbs' house staring at him, black skin and black eyes, antlered head tilting just a bit. Will's heart thuds, his hand twitching, listening as time speeds up even more, the clock's sounds a hum now, the food on the table falling apart to dust. The being at the head of the table stays, unfazed. Unchanged. Will rips his gaze away, dropping it, 'her' ear on a plate a punch to his stomach, making him stumble back. The antlered creature rises, right arm extended, reaching for Will. He falls back, gasping, feeling his body respond, warmth spreading and he forces himself out, the coldness beneath his hands changing to steel, hands clenched, sweaty and shaking.

He shakes his head at Alana when she asks, refuting the knowledge with denial, knowing he saw something important, a chorus of 'oh god' thundering through him with every heartbeat: the being at the table does not age like the things around him do.

******

You invite Chilton over, unable to resist needling him for information about Will. If you could you would rip his care from him.

You cannot help but play dumb regarding his nutrition just to needle him a bit. Chilton's tries to needle you in return are delicious indeed. "You do realize that you're his favorite topic of conversation. Not with me, of course, but with anyone else who'll listen."

Ahhh, Will. You lower your head and smile to yourself, the food delicious. You decide to reach tomorrow. Just a little bit.

******

The murder case is interesting, but not as interesting as the actual access to the forensics team. You make yourself as guileless and unthreatening as possible, catching many smiles in the process. And a comment on the upcoming DNA check and you smile, excusing yourself with a reference to an appointment.

You set the first injection in your living room as the sun falls that night, the little prick unfelt, which is something that cannot be said for the liquid itself. Your very cells clamp down on it, trying to fight and you howl, liquid fire burning you from within. You push the contents in by sheer force of will, breath taken, eyes blind, utterly happy that you decided to do this in your home.
Your legs give and you snarl, the fangs fully dropped, the pain stifling. You crawl forward on the marble stones, going by touch, your body shaking, convulsing. Bile rises and you vomit up food, your suit ruined as you fall over into it. You howl again as another pang hits, muscles locking. Cold sweat breaks out and you push yourself back up again, trying to breathe through it. Your bowels grumble and you snarl again, pushing yourself up and forward to the small bathroom off the hall just in time, your body apparently trying to get rid of everything that might interfere with the remaining vampiric genomes, fighting viciously, the hunger for blood rising tenfold. Your arms fly out and your hands lock on the porcelain basin, ripping it out of the wall when another spasm hits. You fall to the floor when the pain crests and takes your strength with it, leaving echoing weakness behind, your limbs heavy. Your teeth retract by themselves, the hunger burning but your muscles too weak to follow its call.
The absence of pain and strength is terrifying, the stench of bodily fluids and excrements stifling. You resolve to burn the suit later on. You force yourself to push your hand into your pocket, retrieving the other syringe, heavy in your hand.
To be injected in a few hours.
You could just crush it and leave.
It’s what you would have done before you met him.

You sigh heavily, pushing yourself up, gasping, spit dripping from your mouth.
The things one does for love.

Your mind cottons out, a white noise descending, sounds deafening. You clench your fist as you realize you won’t be able to reach for him tonight after all.

Another wave of nausea hits and you curl up on the floor, gritting your teeth.

******

Your brain is sluggish, the hunger roaring.
Beverly Katz pushes the swab into your mouth and it takes all your will power to not bite her finger off, the vessels so tantalizing close.
You concentrate on keeping the conversation instead, feigning interest.
Really, if they keep all your suits, you'll just buy some more.

Her words wound you though. 'You were supposed to protect him.'
You want to scream 'I am' but in a way your instinctual guilt even dampens the hunger a bit.

Well, at least until you are on your way to Bedelia, stopping at a gang meeting in the outskirts of Baltimore. Your hands are shaking, feeling still so very weak. You take the gun out of the hidden compartment under your seat and check the silencer, and then the vicinity for any sign of another coven member. It's really disgraceful to kill like this after all and you really want to avoid the embarrassment. But you also need to get the poison weakening out of your system again, and soon.
You step out, unlocking the safety.
They must have not so many visitors in expensive suits, because the expressions he meets as he enters are puzzled but not troubled.

That changes. Immediately.

Leather taints and rips, the screams music to your ears.
You push your tongue into the wounds when silence falls, gorging yourself.

One more suit for the trash can.
A good thing you have one in the trunk at all times.

The thought that the FBI failed to check your car makes you snort, feeling the effects of the retroactive genome therapy - the poison you think with a sneer - fade with every gulp of the sticky hot liquid.
It's not hers, or even his.
But it will do. For now.

Feeling returns as does sound and you sigh, grinning, the red dripping off your teeth.
You burn the place down, conversely happy that you don't have to hide bite marks this time.

You meet with her and quip a bit, your levity triggering her anger, already triggered by Jack Crawford's visit. You have to admire her spite as she throws it into your face: "Jack Crawford doesn't know what you're capable of."
It is well worth the fear in her eyes as you let the mask slip for just a second. "Neither do you."

You wonder if she might know to flee.
And when.

******

The food tastes ashen, tainted by the feelings of fury and abandonment. He tries not to dwell on the feelings heightened by Beverly's visit and fails, the churning disappointment hurting beyond compare. Will chews mechanically, knowing he will have to keep up his strength.
The memory comes unbidden, laden with emotion and… yearning.
The movements are practical and sure, the gloved hand gentle. His aftershave envelops them both, impassive face trained on Will's, their gazes locking in flashes, with Will unfocused.
There is something in Hannibal's eyes, anger and hunger, their intensity frightening and Will analyzes the feeling he perceives, as the tube goes down his throat, his body seizing and straining, physical reactions impossible to contain.
Something is pushed down the tube, a flash of an ear and then the tube is pulled out again, Will's head pressing into the lower stomach behind him, the hardness just beyond it. The hands are very gentle now, massaging his throat and jaw a bit, diffusing the ache. There is a moment where something hovers in the air between them - the need to bend down and claim, and then it is gone, Hannibal leading him back to the bed and the vision rips, pieces of meat flying from Will's lips.

He gasps, the tablet vibrating in his tightly clenched hands. He puts it to the side, scrunching his eyes closed, willing his heartbeat to slow down. The feeling of plastic softness caressing his jaw returns and Will shakes his head, hands gripping onto the metal bars of his bunk to dislodge it. He reaches for the feeling of leaning back against Hannibal, of that which pressed against him.
That's one hell of an answer to the why alright. But then he had seen traces of that before…
And it doesn't quite explain the why to his current situation either.
Will frowns, mind flitting through the visions and memories, trying to fit everything together.
Hannibal is not in control of his fate, not fully. He is the Ripper, Will is certain of that… but not through psychosis, but through choice, through… disregard.
Will narrows his eyes.
Why does he keep seeing an indigenous - otherworldly - spirit in Hannibal's place?
What does the spirit symbolize? And why… why is it an indigenous one?

The buzzer sounds, interrupting his thoughts and Will sighs noiselessly, shaking his head once as the thought flees.
Still.
He has something.

Now he only has to convince Jack.

******

The chair is empty, beckoning your thoughts.
You do not dare ask Robertas for more help, seeing as to how your dearest Uncle has taken advantage of your situational scheming.

But you need to get him out.
And soon.

He needs to become, after all.

You inhale and drop your head back, reaching. There. You smile, try to push and… you are thrown back, proverbial metal bars slamming down between your minds.
You gasp, sitting straight up, your teeth gleaming in the low light as you grin.
Bruised, but not broken. Mind strong again, now that the encephalitis is under control.

How very brilliant.

Chapter End Notes

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Constructive criticism is welcome if you have it :)
(Or any kind of feedback^^)

Indulgence

Chapter Summary

Of little indulgences and their consequences.

Chapter Notes

Everyone who made it till here deserves some smut. Right? :)
(Even if it is not Hannigram (yet))

Introducing someone who will be necessary later on.
Hope you'll enjoy^^

_____

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He is gorgeous.
Bronze skin, dark curls, just a tad too long. Angular, somewhat feline features, the brown eyes speckled with green, the lush mouth curled into a seductive smile. A put on, forced smile, but seductive no less. He is leaning against the door frame, nails polished and filed to sharp tips, something that is apparently ‘hip’ with the freshly turned. Your eyes assess him, his body clad in smart slacks and a satin shirt, clinging just the tiniest bit at the waist.
He smells of O negative, freshly fed on. And Robertas, the clothes he wears quite obviously from your Uncle’s closet.

You inhale deeply, savoring the aroma, raising your eyes to him. “While I appreciate the visit, to what occurrence do I owe it?”
He laughs, white teeth flashing, the fangs dropped. He shifts, his hip coming forward just a bit. Ah. Your lips twitch, mind racing. A gift. Your skin prickles, a shiver spreading, something that has been happening from time to time ever since you took the retroactive gene therapy. His hand comes up, tracing the cloth of your suit over the place where the shiver took place, softly stroking.
“Robertas said it was part of the healing process, your cells still readapting. It just needs time.” He clicks his tongue, rising his chin defiantly. “And a bit of … support.”

You tilt your head, pursing your mouth. You -could- just pull him in and feed of him… You shift, the empty chair in your office flitting through your mind. You refuted Sebastian's advances because you know his proclivities and you wish the next person to breach your body to be -him-. Will. But… it will be quite a while still. Self made problems and all. And this fledgling isn't in a position to dictate anything. Anticipation trickles down your spine and you allow it to transpire, change the way you smell. His nostrils flare, his smile turning a bit lewd, more honest. His eyes flit over you, assessing, quite boldly.

You step back, extending your arm. Offering the illusion of choice. "Enter if you wish. I will happily accept you for tonight if you do."
He blushes a bit, swallowing, trying to saunter by nonchalantly, passing you to enter the foyer quite bravely. Robertas chose well. You wonder if he will be part of your Uncle's personal entourage. You step up behind him, just an inch taller than him. -His- height. Brown curls. Heat curls in your stomach, knowing it was done on purpose, not a perfect match as to not insult you, but a close match to please you. It won't be as if with a conjoined lover, more with a provider, but very pleasing indeed. You decide to make this little… errand… worth his while indeed.

Your lips descend onto his neck, nose pushing through the curls, inhaling deeply. An expensive aftershave, traces of sandalwood and lemon, the mixture quite endearing. For a moment you long for the stench of the cheap one you hate so much on -him-, but you push the thought away. Your tongue touches skin, wondering at the little stifled gasp. Your left hand ghosts along his hip, inching forward, greeted by hot hardness in front, the gasp quite audible when you cup him there. You grin, squeezing once before you release him, mouthing a bit at his neck in the process, drawing a sigh.

You click your tongue. "You are much too high strung for what I have in mind. What is your name?"
He swallows, the mirrors in your foyer showing his eyes heavily lidded. "Mendo."
Mendo. Meaning 'Offers sacrifices to God.' Oh yes, well chosen, Uncle. You smirk, wondering. "Have you lain with men in your mortal life, Mendo?"
He swallows, words coming haltingly. "Not… not fully. I… there were hand jobs."
And still he is so aroused. You decide to be kind, your hands resting lightly on his hips, pressing forward until he can feel you. The dropping of your fangs is a rush. "Is this what you wish?"
His head tilts backwards slightly, swallowing again. "Anything you wish to do."

You hum, your left hand tracing up his side to grip his head and pull it back harshly. "I asked if -you- wanted this, Mendo."
He stares at you, unblinking and then takes your hand from his chin and pulls it down to the heat in his crotch, his voice raw. "I was always afraid back then. But now there is not much to be afraid of anymore, isn't there? After all it will heal."

You smile viciously, keeping your thoughts to yourself. Oh, there is plenty to fear still. And yes, he will heal. You grind forward just a bit, watch as his eyelids flutter. It will be pleasure for this one's first time though. Good practice for you. You bend forward a bit and bite at his lips, tracing your tongue over the soft inside. Your right hand keeps him in position, making him yield. He closes his lips around your left fang, the sensation traveling through you. You

groan and claim his mouth, harshly, delighted when he kisses back, tongues battling. Your fangs tear each other a bit and the kiss turns messy, red ecstasy throbbing between you. You rear back, chuckling, left hand dropping back to his waist, turning him forward again. He sighs and then bends forward complacently, forearms propped up on the little table in the middle of the room, shifting his stance. For a split second you are tempted to just fuck him here, dry, harshly. And then you snort a bit at yourself, remembering your afore resolution. Your hands undo his belt, slowly, pushing his clothes down gently. He is twitching beneath your hands, nervous and unbearably aroused, hands clenched together, head lowered. You caress his lower back and cheeks for a moment, not squeezing, just gliding, inhaling when you can smell his precome, his smell intensifying. He won't last long.

You grin, your words infused with humor and anticipation. "Grip onto the far edge of the table. Whatever happens, that is where they will stay. Is that clear."

He nods jerkily, doing as you said, knuckles white. You hum again in agreement letting your own excitement simmer, slowly pushing his feet out with your own. He is short of breath now, clenching, sweat making the shirt cling even more. You lower yourself soundlessly, your hands spreading him, opening him up for consumption. He shouts when you lick a broad swipe along his perineum, his balls drawing up already, precome dropping to the floor. You push him apart even more, touching your tongue right under his sphincter, feeling the muscles clench, the breathless sigh making you grin. You lick up, the sounds he makes spurring you on, every lick accompanied by sighs and grunts, gasps and moans. All too soon the cadence changes, high pitched whines entering the moans and you hum into him, pushing your tongue deep once before you start to tongue-fuck him, increasing the speed until he stills beneath you, suspended on your hands and your mouth. You push your tongue in, waiting, feeling him clench around it, the wet foreign muscle too strong to yield, the taste of his orgasm rushing through every nerve ending, every fiber. He literally falls to the ground and you fall with him, still staying, knowing you are prolonging, the body in your hands jerking helplessly, the floor and his clothes a mess. You stay until he stills and then push yourself up, entering the little bathroom off to the side to wash your mouth.

******

You are in the kitchen, decanting the wine when he enters, soiled clothes pulled up perfunctory, hair disheveled and still flushed. You offer him a glass, smirking when he blushes, deeply. What a beautiful little distraction. You wonder if Will will blush as easily. He sure has the skin for it. His words pull you back.

"Thank you", he swallows, eyes shifting back and forth, "though I bet Robertas did intend it quite differently…" He pulls at some nonexistent fluff on his shirt.
You shrug slightly, taking a sip of your own wine, swirling it around a bit before responding. "While I thank Robertas for the opportunity, what I do or not do is none of his business." You grin, lightly toasting him. "Besides, who says that I am done with you already."
He blushes again, gulping down a big swallow. Under the circumstances you feel you can

forgive him this little transgression. You tilt your head. “I am curious. Were you a provider before Robertas turned you?”
He shakes his head, twirling the stem of the glass in his hand. “No, I am only recently turned. On my 26th birthday. Robertas met me at a club and … said he liked my looks.”
You raise one brow, silently complimenting Robertas’ planning. A turning takes a while, he must have foreseen the developments with Will quite clearly if he went and prepared a gift that early. You sigh, narrowing your eyes. One more thing to … discuss. Someday.

You turn back to Mendo, silently refilling his glass, watching the way his throat moves when he swallows. Sometime in the near future your teeth will be buried in it, holding him down with your weight and superior strength, prolonging his orgasm once more. And your own.
You shift, adjusting yourself with the movement and nod at Mendo, your voice kind but unyielding.
“Please go upstairs and have a shower in the master bedroom’s en-suite bathroom. Leave your clothes on the bathroom floor. Dry yourself and then lie on the bed.”

He huffs a laugh and then drains the glass, putting it down with a little clink. He hesitates and then turns, walking up without any of the put on lewdness of before, but just as much bravery.
You smile and then take out your phone, checking your messages. One text from Alana, asking you to come along for a session with Will, tomorrow at noon. You type your “I’ll be glad to come along as support for you” and send it, delight that you will see him again so soon raising your spirits even more. You draw your tongue along your fangs and follow Mendo upstairs.

******
His skin glows against the blue bedspread, his body spread out for you to feast on. You appreciate the angles and curves, the few hairs speckled across his stomach and across his chest. His gaze is expectant, half aroused again already, slowly caressing himself. You unclothe yourself, folding the clothes away properly before you step up to the bed, pulling out the drawer of the night stand.
You can hear his heart speed up when you pull out the lube, tongue wetting his lips. You look a him for a moment, tone dry. “While fucking without lubrication can have its merits, I do not intend your first time to be so… intense.” You close the drawer again, tracing the wood for a moment. “Maybe another time.” His swallow is audible, his arousal complete once more, breathing heavy.

You turn and sit down on the edge, next to his hip, trailing your left index finger down his chest. “Hold onto the headboard.”
He complies, his response breathless, cheeky. “You like to have people helpless beneath you?”

You flash a smile, the undertone in your voice making him shiver. “No. If I wanted you helpless I would break your neck so you would not be able to move.” You bend down to suck at his left nipple, changing his fear into lust again within moments. “I want you to hold onto

something because I want you to let yourself fall into the rest of it." You switch to the other nipple, twirling your tongue around it until he gasps, hips moving a bit. "Very good." You push up, regarding him for a moment before you bend forward and kiss him, softly, just gliding lips and spit, ending in soft nips and pulls. "Although, while on your stomach is easier for a first time, I will take you this way." You lick along your own fangs, mouth open so he can see, making him lift his chin subconsciously, pupils blown. "I wish to fall forward as you come, burying my teeth deep within you." He groans, eyes closing for a moment. You look down, taking a drop of precome from him to lift it to your lips. "I will fill you as you will fill me."

A slight scratching sound as his nails clench, scratching your head board. You harrumph, slapping his side non too gently until he mumbles a small 'sorry' and relaxes his fingers again, a sheen of perspiration covering his skin. He licks his lips and you climb on top of him, straddling his chest without dropping your weight. You look down at him, pushing a bit forward, delighted when he groans and raises his head a bit on his own, taking you in. He licks at your head, pushing back the foreskin, his lips close behind the crown, the angle not allowing for much more. You drop your hands to his head, clenching in his curls and guide his movements, slow, miniature push and pulls filling the air with the smell of sex. He starts to suck in earnest, trying to get more of your precome, his sounds of enjoyment making it very clear that he wasn't aware it is saturated a bit with blood, more so in elders. "Ah ah ah…" You lock your fingers and pull him off, looking down into his slack face, spit and precome glistening on his lips, his chest heaving beneath you, pushing against your testicles on every breath. "Not too much now, we don't want you sated, do we."

He mewls and you grin, pushing down and backwards until you can lick into his mouth, tasting yourself. Your hole catches against his cock and his breath hitches, eyes wide. You bite softly at his chin, chuckling. "Sorry. Not for you."
He hisses, laughing softly. "Dammit." He swallows. "I'm slightly jealous."
You bite at his left nipple drawing blood that you lick up, the emotion exploding behind your eyes. "Indeed." Another bite, the taste delicious. "And we're not even done yet."

He laughs, squirming a bit beneath you, licking his lips. You trail your tongue down his stomach, following the sparse hairs but skipping his genital area, earning you a breathed curse. You move down, spreading his legs, softly pushing them apart and up, making sure he is comfortable holding them this way. You whisper, a bit salaciously. "No worries. You won't need to hold them up the whole time. They'll be over my shoulders soon." His eyes close, the whispered 'fuck' almost inaudible.

You reach for the lube, taking a generous amount of the gel onto your fingers, warming it. You circle his entrance, watching it clench before you push one finger in, past the constriction and unheeding of his startled moan, finding your goal unerringly. His whole body jerks, the gasp stuck somewhere in his throat. You grin, pushing a second finger in just as fast, his shout now with an edge to it. You hum, taking your time moving these fingers, missing the goal more often than not. It takes a while but he relaxes, the reward instant, followed by deep rubs of that spot by three fingers, changing the sounds between them to deep groans. You contemplate moving to four but then dismiss the thought, his arousal fully returned again already, cock heavy on his stomach. You pull your fingers out, drawing a sigh and lube yourself up, moving into position slowly.

You spread him even more and line up, draping his legs over your shoulders, locking your gazes. And then you push, slowly but unrelentingly, your hands on his thighs keeping him from squirming away, his body giving after a moment and you bottom out, seeing his eyes pitch black, mouth open in a silent scream. You lean back a bit and lick your teeth, whispering. “Ready?”

His eyes widen and you laugh softly, starting with gentle rolls of your hips, the soft squelching sounds echoing your movements. He sighs when you turn to long strokes but it is the short, jabbing thrusts that draw him out of himself, reduce him to a mess of lust, body tightening. You lube yourself up twice more while taking him, unheeding his protests not to stop, making sure it’s wet enough, changing positions slightly until his eyes fall shut, face slack, just about to tumble down the precipice. And then you bend forward, bending him in half, your hands coming up to pull his head back, exposing his throat. The hunger roars and you let it, the world pulsing red, your hips starting to fuck into him in earnest and you rear forward, ripping into him, your lips sealing the wound. You taste the orgasm rushing through him, thundering seemingly endlessly in the feedback loop, your seed, filling him, giving enough back to ensure his survival of this onslaught. Blood pours down your throat in big gulps, spreading everywhere, so, so delicious, images rushing by too fast to decipher within your own orgasm blinding your mind, taking all thought away. Almost all thought. One remains, making you bite down deeper.
‘I wonder how -he- will be’.

******

You wake Mendo at 3am, wishing to prepare for the day ahead on your own. He looks at you with a weird light in his eyes, his movements sluggish, drained and yet, sated. You remember that feeling well and you smile at him, indicating your closet with a nod of your head.
“Take some new clothes if you wish. And tell Robertas ‘Thank you’”.

You see the shadow cross his face and click your tongue, pulling him up with one hand.
“Now, don’t be naive, Mendo. This has been fun.” You lean a bit closer. “And I do hope you enjoyed yourself as well.” He nods, breathing in deeply. You drop his hand and raise it to the barely healed wound in his throat. “This life works differently in many ways. Some of it you will enjoy.” You leave the rest unsaid, watching him swallow, his Adam’s apple bopping prettily. “You are welcome to share my bed again until I say otherwise.”
His eyes snap up, blinking, voice hesitant. “Won’t… “
You interrupt him with a light chuckle. “No, he won’t. Between him and me you will enjoy yourself quite nicely, I’d say.”
He snorts and you nod at him and then step back, leaving him to shower.

******

He is much better an actor than you anticipated, lulling Alana’s senses quite nicely. A tour de force performance, tears and breakdown included. It is something to bear in mind.

You escort Alana to her car and then excuse yourself, returning to the BSHCI under the pretense that he needs a quick word with Frederick. You push your will onto the guards, waltzing in pretending to be allowed, secure in the knowledge that Frederick will now be having his lunch, now that he believes you've left.

You find him staring at the cell wall, his scent changing with adrenaline when you step up, but ignoring you for long minutes. Finally he sighs through his nose and tilts his head, just a bit, and you smile, your voice very low. "I compliment your… dedication."

He frowns, eyes narrowing. "I guess Frederick must be at lunch…"
You chuckle, humming a bit. "I wouldn't know."

He snorts, pinching the bridge of his nose. "Of course not." He clicks his tongue, voice full of rage and yet exhausted, giving you a sidelong glance. "You are aware that this comes down to capital punishment, don't you."
Well, theoretically. You would probably break him out of the death chamber if need be. You are quite sure he does not appreciate your dead pan tone. "Murders often are."

He looks at you then, locking eyes. "And we are both aware of that, aren't we."
You smile as you turn to go, voice low. "Yes, we are."

******
She comes to you on the heels of the elation you feel after your visit with him, bravery worn as a shield. You wonder if it is your actual therapy subject or maybe… maybe she heard of Mendo. Either way, she is resolute and terrified, knowing exactly what he can do. And yet.
"Neither do you."
Absolutely worth it, just to see her face.

A good thing you invited Mendo to your bed.
You should tell him to feed properly before he comes to visit.

******

They call you again to assist, the lab's antiseptic smell sour in your nose. You try to follow the discussion, keeping just on top of it but you are distracted, the smell of -him- clinging to Beverly Katz. They are using him for this case, your insights, stunted on purpose as they might be, not enough for them. Spoiled. It makes you furious. You suppress the emotion, keeping your face blank and your voice even.

You vow to yourself you will accompany her, next time.
In the meantime, the corpse smells of corn. Amongst other things.

******

You meet Will the next morning, sparring a bit about power differences. You wonder what brought this on. He is sassy today, a bit firmer, pushing. Beginning to play.

Delightful.

You wish he wouldn't help Beverly though. You want his attention on yourself. But he is not easily dissuaded, brushing your words off. You decide to redirect the game back to him, offering insight and guidance. "You're missing pieces of yourself. Careful what you replace them with."

It's an easy comment, especially from a psychiatrist and also a very clear off in your opinion. And also a very open admission that you are missing him terribly, if you are honest to yourself. The admission flutters in your stomach.
It shows that he caught that when he closes the conversation shortly after, his eyes firmly locked on yours. "Maybe he's missing pieces, too."

Yes, you are.

You don't intervene as he gesticulates for the wardens, lets himself be cuffed, eyes clear on yours as they take him away. You refrain from tracing the cage, knowing you are watched.

******
The corn field is easily found, the silos reeking of death and chemicals. You climb up, wanting to get an overview of the site, the plastic suit squeaking just slightly making you mourn the necessity. The view takes your breath away, the eye almost perfect, staring up at you, bodies almost perfectly preserved, the setup sheer art.

When the man enters the words come from deep within your heart, falling easily from your lips. "I love your work."

He looks up and sees his God, the one judging over his life, right now.
You jump down and overtake him, strangling him into unconsciousness. It would not do to leave this unperfected for the police to find. And they will be here soon, of that your are sure.

You undress him and place him, using the force of your mind to keep him in place as he wakes up.

You smile as you kill him with his own drugs, perfecting the art he created.
You take his leg with you to savor later.
And the rest of the heroin.
You never know after all.

******
You know she has been visiting him again without you and so you feel quite unsettled when you return from the crime scene to pay a visit to him with her.

Her tone draws your attention. So she is helping Will collect evidence against you. Interesting.

She offers the new crime scene photos to him and you suddenly realize, that this will be the first time you see him reconstruct a scene, the first time you see him use his famed abilities.

It takes your breath away and you indulge yourself by extending your senses. He smells divine.

You swallow and then draw his attention to what the murderer might have seen last, wanting him to know. NEEDING him to know.

He closes his eyes and you watch, breathlessly, KNOWING he knows when the sharp, citrus smell of adrenaline springs up, the endorphins rushing through him. His eyes fly open again, nodding slightly to himself, looking everywhere but at you. Only looking back up at you when you throw in that he must have had a friend.

His look says it all.
You have to fight hard not to smile.

******

The river is quiet today, fish elusive but the quiet is soothing. It is broken by steps, heeled, echoing in the dark hallway.

There is a line on the floor, meant for visitors in this god forlorn place and she places the very tips of her shoes on it, composing herself, her chin raising slightly, face so cunningly faking remorseful sincerity.

Will raises slowly from the little bench that doesn't quite deserve the name bed, intrigued addressing her haltingly. "I don't know you…"
She tilts her head a fraction, politely introducing herself. "My name is Bedelia du Maurier."
Will starts though he tries to hide it, nodding to himself, truly interested now. "Hannibal Lecter's psychiatrist… What's that like?"

She sighs quietly. "I've heard so much about you, I feel I almost know you."
His response is instant, condescending. "You don't."
It's a statement and one instantly confirmed by her. "No, I don't." She waits a moment before continuing. "I understand you better than I thought. I… wanted to meet you before I… withdraw."

He tilts his head, his stormy eyes almost piercing. "What are you withdrawing from?"
"Social ties."

An almost snort, right before he fires the question, derision coloring his tone. "Well, you're a psychiatrist, isn't our sense of self a consequence of social ties?"

“They certainly are in your case.“ She pauses for a moment. “It may be small comfort, but I am convinced Hannibal has done what he honestly believes is best for you.“

It pisses Will off. “Oh, that isn’t small comfort, that would be -no- comfort.“
She takes a breath, her voice quietly imploring. “The traumatized are unpredictable, because we know we can survive.“ She continues, feeding the rage in Will. “You can survive this happening to you.“

He catches on right away, breathless in gratification and confirmed suspicion. “Happening -to- me?“
She regards him for a moment and then steps up to him, pushing herself up to the bars. The wardens call to her over the intercom, the buzzer sounds and hectic steps pull up to her. Will’s eyes are locked onto hers and she breathes the words to him, too low for the cameras and microphones. “I… believe you.“

He gasps and rears back, watching the wardens escort her out, reeling.
She knows then.
She must know.

Something clicks.

And she is still .....mortal?!
How?

Chapter End Notes

_____

I hope you liked the smut - and the formatting :)
And also the pacing, I'm veering off a bit more. S2 is so suggestive, it can be done without the word-to-word interpretation :)
Let me know what you think?
<333

(Also, the next part has 11 scenes, and some smut again) :)

Distractions

Chapter Summary

Distractions in proceedings and a game that's shifting.
Also some sexy times... kinda. :)

Chapter Notes

Canon gore warning :)

As far as Will is concerned, empathy is a shit show.

He tries to turn his mind away from imagining his own execution, the United States' system offering varying possibilities. It doesn't work. One horror vision after horror vision flits through his mind, jolts through his veins, leaving him short breathed. His heart thunders in his chest, still reeling from the implications that Ms. du Maurier's visit has made clear. He tries to calm himself, knowing they will come soon, to collect him to the trial.

The poison gas he smells tastes of vinegar and betrayal.

The healing wound in his shoulder hurts, making him grimace and he rolls it, trying to relieve the ache. At least it's not a shooting commando. He snorts, mouth twitching in a vicious, quavering grin. The orderly steps up, holding one of his more grave suits in their hand.
"It's time."

Will nods, vaguely satisfied when his hand doesn't shake when he takes it at least. He wonders who will be there today, the weeks past already fading out while the months ahead seem daunting. He dresses himself without any concern to modesty, any reservations he might have had regarding this subject once upon a time burned away by the insistent care of Frederick Chilton.
Will presses his lips together once, buttoning up the shirt.
Alana had had it ironed, some of the buttons too tight, refastened apparently. He has to concentrate to button them and for just an instant it's not his hand, not his chest breathing. He swallows and then reaches for his jacket, refusing to think about it too much.

So he will be there as well.
Will's neck cracks as he tilts it, the stiffness unable to remove.
A sudden flair of fury as he puts on his glasses, inhales deeply, the aroma of the air forever

damp.
Well, he better fucking be.

Will blinks and draws on the dampness to conjure his river, gliding along his mind just outside of reach. For now.

******

An ear.
There is an … ear, toppling from the envelope.
An instant rush of adrenaline, pulling Will back from his river instantly.
Static descends, cottoning out all sounds, heartbeat slowing, the space between the thumps lengthening. Bile rises in his throat, the phantom sensation of a tube pushing down. Of hands, petting him. He blinks. The ear is clotted with dry blood where the cut was made, obviously fresh. The thought comes unbidden and Will clenches his jaw on it, immediately sure this wasn't done by Hannibal. 'It should be in my stomach, shouldn't it? Or someone else's…'

His lawyer drones on, hectically talking to someone on the phone but Will doesn't care. Doesn't want to care, the little red flakes of dried blood fanned out on the papers like miniature rose petals, beautiful and entropic. The cut is relatively clean, the ear unwashed but also relatively blood free. Likely cut off after death, then. It's a male ear, an … overture. The first act of an elaborate play. Maybe? Will locks his eyes on the ear until his vision wavers, his thoughts racing.

Someone died for him, for a change in the proceedings of his trial.
Someone… was able to get his hands on the necessary background info to do … something … for him, something similar to his alleged crimes.
Someone who is interested in him, but has not engaged him yet.
Because… that someone… killed first, mutilated later.
Not a sadist then.

Will looks at the envelope, the way the ear was just dumped into it.
Not an artist, either.

So, definitely not Hannibal Lecter.

He narrows his eyes, hope rearing its head.
Another player then.

Someone… he might be able to use.

******

You're wearing the gray, red-striped suit today, admitting to yourself that you feel just a bit irritated. And conversely wishing to look good, a text arriving just minutes before Jack informing you that you will be eagerly awaited when you get home.

You pour some Brandy for Jack and yourself, wondering if Will might relief himself in the dark of the night, when he feels the echo of your pleasure through your as of yet brittle but undeniably existing bond. If he is listening to the fire in your thoughts when you pretend it's him you use so thoroughly. If he feels the ache just as you do.

You let the imagined scene color your tone as you compliment Jack for his testimony, slowly segueing into preemptive condolences. It's so easy to manipulate him in this state, mourning for pupil and wife, fate seemingly impossible to change.
You can't let him quit the FBI though.
Not yet.

Not while he is on your side.

The text comes when you use your profession to persuade him, calling him back to the lab.

An ear.
How…. Ingenious.
Mendo will have to wait a bit longer, then.

You go with Jack and easily confirm Will's statement, smelling the fire and gun powder on the ear. The 'half' objection only pertains to the fresh kill but they are really not suspicious enough to detect it.

******

You decide to visit him on the way back, freshly brought back to his cell from the courtroom, smelling of sweat and other people's perfumes. There is another perfume here. Hers.
It is a good thing she ran, interfering with your business won't do.
You clench your teeth on the impulse to hunt her down and rip out her throat with your teeth.
It would not do, not now.

The taste of the word 'admirer' is ashen in your mouth, though you take care not to let it show.
His eyes tell you he caught it anyways and his next question reflects that, an intensity to know demanding an answer. "How far would you go to help me?"

'Oh, my darling, you have no idea.' You lick along your teeth, hesitating with the answer, obfuscating more than explaining. He actually calls you out on it, and you allow the smirk to touch your mouth as you continue your sparring, wondering at his fire. She must have told him something confirming his memories, his fears.
Time to remove this advantage then. "You may not be guilty."

His eyes snap up to yours as you continue, flashing and furious and … hopeful. Something glints in them, something wild and indomitable. Your words mellow on their meaning, knowing he reads you just fine. “He cares what happens to you.”

His eyes are wide and unblinking now, letting you see. And there it is, flaring up from embers, your heartbeats syncing, the prison around you falling away. Darkness swirls around you and you inhale, smelling him, pushing your mind forward, barreling into his. A gasp between you, his name, whispered, there in the space between reality and dreaming. You let your feelings concentrate and then bite your tongue and breathe out, the droplets carried away absorbed instantly by his skin, shivering through his body. In a flash he gets up from the cod and his hands shoot up to clench on the bars, his body instantly pushed beyond arousal by your blood, by your longing, your… need.

And then he stumbles back, falling back onto his cod, drawing up his legs, breath heavy. Reality descends again, hiding the physical reactions in bad lighting, muting his whispered words. You have to strain to understand them. “Does he now?”
‘Oh yes’, you want to say, ‘he does.’

You inhale, smelling him once more, knowing he knows. And then you decide, leveling him with a dark look, deliberately licking your licks before you address him. “Concentrate tonight Will. Maybe … something else will happen then.”

You grin and turn, leaving him in his cell, desperately aroused and unwilling to do anything about it, his breathed ‘Asshole’ following you out.

It will be an experiment.

You are all about experiencing new things after all.

******

Mendo waits for you, lounging easily in your living room.
He is relaxed, way too relaxed to be wise for a fledgling as young as he is, but then he didn’t have to learn much. Not yet. You weigh your head and then decide against teaching him anything else than pleasure. Life will come at him, and fast.
It always does.

You’re sure Robertas will teach him quite sufficiently.

You put your coat away before you enter the large room, signaling him to stay put with a wave of your hand, the scratch of the gramophone intimate in the air between you when you set down the little diamond. Vivaldi fills the air and memories threaten for a moment, dusty air streaming from places in your memory palace, there and gone again when you blink.

He twists and pours you a glass of wine, mixed with a good portion of his blood. Delicious. You smile when you take it, inhaling deeply. The aroma of lust and the thrill of life, apparently unending tickle your nose before you swallow it down, fire spreading for a moment. You concentrate hard for a moment, the impression of a cold stone wall in your back making you smirk.

You glide down to your knees, making sure that they won't crease before you shuffle forward, putting the glass on the little side table. He is already short of breath, watching you wide-eyed, hands clenching on the arm rests. You smile, teeth glinting, pulsing. "Let me. I wish to do an experiment. For this I must keep my eyes closed and concentrate." You blink, licking along your teeth. "Do you consent?"
He swallows, eyes narrowed in confusion. "And… what should I do?"
Your smile turns wolflike, fangs descending in slow motion. "I want you to be quiet and supine, let me handle you. Receive. Stay half seated, even if it may be uncomfortable."
Mendo exhales slowly, arousal coming off of him in waves. "Alright."

You smile salaciously and then click your tongue, softly kneading his thighs. "Quiet now. Not a word, not a sigh. Only breaths and music."
You wait until he closes his eyes and then lets his head fall back, fingers skimming over the seams of his pants. The knife you take from your pocket clicks open and he almost gasps as you cut them off, his underwear following with a sharp sound, the cloth yielding easily. Goosebumps erupt along his skin, his cock bouncing a bit with every breath.
You lean forward and close your eyes, breathing in and concentrating, pushing, pushing, until the scent changes, earth and water and stones and cheap cloth, chafing on skin. You lick up, the darkness behind your eyes iridescent and rapidly expanding. The cloth presses against skin now, a wild, unbelieving gasp echoes through your mind and the connection >drops< into existence, a ripple along both your consciousnesses.

You waste no time and swallow deep, the salty tang gliding along your tongue, making you hum. The stones press into your shoulder blades as your back goes rigid, heels dug into the ground, hands clenched into the mattress at your sides. Your eyes are scrunched shut, lips pressed firmly together, wet heat engulfs you. The suction is intense and you hollow your lips, drawing precome, tightening your lips under the head, applying just enough pressure to force the orgasm up, up, up, up your spine and down into your guts, unstoppable, blinding in intensity. You swallow harshly, letting the last bit drip from your lips to slick the rim, thumb pressing onto it. A wounded sound rips from your lips as you fall sideways, the mattress pressing into your face, hips canted at an awkward angle. You grip the metal bars of the bedstead, the phantom sensation ruthless in keeping you aroused through the post orgasmic haze, another finger massaging the rim just right. It goes on forever and you keep the motions gentle, the pressure even, until the cock lifts into your mouth once more, the buildup slow, your face slack, turned away from the bars. You keep your tongue at the base, pressing into the vein there in pulses, impossible to resist, your body tensing on the shabby mattress, breath short. You hum, the cold air of the prison cell tickling your skin as you move up and swallow down once more, deep, holding. You bite your fist, your other hand pushing against the stones, the pressure rushing up your spine, exploding in painful ecstasy, your cell burning bright for just an instant.

You draw back reveling in the feeling of -him- on your tongue, the thundering heart in your chest followed sedately by your own, your arousal pressing against the seems of your pants, the front of your jumpsuit sticky and uncomfortable. You release your fist, deep indents in the skin, your breath ragged. You take the fist, inhale deeply once, and then hit it against the wall with a shout, the connection shattering apart like a murder of crows, and you howl in frustration, eyes glowing deep red.

Mendo regards you with confusion, disheveled and still reeling from the two orgasms he has received. You snarl and crawl up, dripping the last of his semen onto him for lubrication before you undress yourself perfunctory, bending him up. He takes you in, easily, his waning cry as you sheathe yourself fanning the fury even hotter, the fact that he is not -him- a pulsing tunnel of resentment. You fuck into him, roughly, growling, watching as he gives into you with a lewd smile, his body limber under your hands. You refuse your orgasm until you wring another one from him, his body seizing under you, wide-eyed and mouth open in a silent scream, your own toppling the fury into blood frenzy, your teeth ripping him open, drinking your fill greedily.

You will probably have to buy a new armchair, the material does not take too kindly to being doused in blood.

Still.
You slow your swallowing, reason returning in increments.
For a first test this was… sublime.
You smile viciously and then withdraw, making sure to lick until he's healed.
Tests must be repeated after all.

You carry Mendo to bed, unsurprised to see it is already 3am. His skin is almost translucent and you know he will sleep for quite a while, only to wake up almost feral with blood lust, your blood not enough to replace what you took today. You take the stairs down, to the kitchen, unamused when you see only two bottles of your stash in the little closet. This won't do, especially not if Will is released anytime soon. You just know you will need a lot of time for him. You go back up, hesitating on the last step. Maybe it could be rebuilt into a pantry. You can always take the main stairwell after all. And this way… you might even have some storage room to grow your snails here. And get a proper steel table.
You smile, putting the bottles gently onto the nightstand, opening one so Mendo's blood frenzy might not spill over to your house cleaning crew.

Your phone rings, Jack's voice tired but excited, brimming with an energy that had been missing in the last few weeks. "Dr. Lecter. We need your expertise at a crime scene. Please come immediately. I will text you the address in a moment."
You frown, remembering the bloody chair in the living room. You tilt your head. "Could this wait till the morning, Jack?"
A sigh on the other side of the line, Jack's voice firm. "I'm afraid not. We found the body to the ear."
A jolt runs through you, your voice carefully not reflecting. "I see. I will be there shortly, then."
You sign off, resigning yourself to just throw the chair into the garage for now and get rid of

it later.
Time to see Will Graham's admirer's work.

******

You use a bit of your mind-power to have Beverly Katz make you a copy of the Bailiff's report, aware that it may have been to easy. Well, she can sniff around as she wants. Nothing to see in your cellar. Not yet.
Which reminds you and you phone the coven's home renovations crew, issuing the request for a quote to have a pantry built. And a few other things. Finally something good that comes from having Robertas as the coven master… your request is met with the highest priority and various… ass kissing. Those sycophants. You click off as you drive to the BSHCI, wondering where Robertas might be these days. Probably off creating his own Fledgling-harem, an inner vampire circle a bit like a lion's den that way. When the new lion takes over, the children will be replaced. You click your tongue, sighing noiselessly. Lucille had had outstanding taste. Such a shame.
Maybe some will show up in another run down coven at some point.

You drum your fingers on the wheel, wondering how he will be tonight. If he felt your fingers gliding for an instant when the trial began a few days back.

You follow the orderly through the halls, delighted to smell him already on the way. While hygiene has been on acceptable levels, the sheer amount of time he spends within the same clothes has strengthened his scent, has purified him even, especially now that the fever has gone, the encephalitis successfully treated. There is an excess of soap on his skin today, masking the remnants of the pleasure you brought him last night, the clothes freshly provided. He looks better today, courtesy of endorphins-relaxed sleep. You refuse the smile that wants to settle in the corners of your mouth. It has been your pleasure. You inhale deeply as you enter, hiding your processing and the …. effect it has on you under a mask of indifference.
You really should know better.

You click your tongue at yourself inwardly, sinking down into your seat with only a few perfunctory glances, seeing him guarded, watching intently. Trying to see all of you. You wonder if he sees the effect he has on you.
You give him the reports, silently hyped when he skims them only, all important facts obviously burning themselves in within seconds. Your mind flits to the extensive library you have saved away for later, your heart picking up speed. It will be so splendid to immerse yourself in ancient knowledge with him.
Later.

His eyes close and you watch them move behind closed lids, the real world and you shut out, a murder and murderer resurrected.
You wished you could see him now as he sees himself, as he kills so ruthlessly.
Making the kill into, admittedly primitive, art.

Adrenaline and … pleasure emanates off of him, paired with the lush citrus bitterness of guilt.
‘Ah darling, such a long way you’ve come, such a long way still to go.’
Delicious.

His eyes snap open and you lock onto him, his pupils dilated, so sure. He recites the lack of sadism back at you, his eyes glittering coldly, calling you out, leaning forward, into your space. Brave. You swallow the desire to reach out to him down, keeping your face resigned.

You know he knows the supposedly bug-free room is very likely bugged and so you put on a mournful face, playing it trite, immediately rewarded when he ricochets his answers back, his eyes flashing in disdain, jaw pushed forward, the slight underbite showing prominently, sharpening his syllables.

Your suggestion to deceive has him recoil, face blanking out. You silently curse to yourself, knowing some of the brittle whatever you have built has been destroyed by this, hastening to repair immediately.
You push the truth forward, captivated by the stormy blue of his eyes, the need to have more of him. “I don’t want you to be here.”

His eyes are wide, unblinking on you. Seeing through you. It’s a bit unsettling. “I don’t want me to be here, either.”

You exhale, choosing your words very carefully. “Then you have a choice. This killer wrote you a poem, Will. Are you going to let his love go to waste?”

His lips twitch, eyes still locked with yours, the energy between you flaring. The air grows thick, the soft click as his mouth opens a loud echo between you. “Is it love though?”

You tilt your head, voice soft. “What else would it be?”

Will frowns, still watching you. “Lust. For the game maybe. Desire to find a kindred soul.” He grins wryly. “Boredom.”

You smile back at him for a moment, quite serious. “I doubt the level of commitment needed for this kind of crime is anything short of lust at the very least.”

Will hums, his eyes dropping down for an instant, the gaze burning when it travels over your mouth. “Lust is a selfish emotion. You want something specific of the object of your desire, the means to achieve it almost meaningless in the game.”

Yes. So he is aware he is being played with. Wicked boy. “Lust can also be used to achieve your goal.” You smirk, dropping your voice until you are pretty sure it will be indistinguishable background noise for Frederick. “Sometimes in the dead of the night, when all the walls are down.”

He stares at you, heart beating hard in his chest. Aware. His eyes drop to your mouth again, a minute frown between his eyes. Ah. Well, he deserves some recompense after you … pushed your lust to him after all.

You inhale and then drop your mouth open in a quiet exhale, signaling your exasperation to the orderlies waiting outside. You turn your face away from the glass wall just a bit, letting your teeth descend until they glint over your lower lip, touching just so. His hands twitch, the chain clinking, his pupils blown. Your gaze falls to his knuckles, to where he scratched off the skin when he forcefully separated your connection. You lick your tongue along them, leaving just the tiniest red smear on your lips, your voice almost inaudible. “And sometimes, lust is only the overture.”
You smile softly, gathering the documents and standing up, his gaze snapping back up to your eyes. You click your tongue, tone returning to normal, finishing the visit with a comment thrown back with a hand on the door already. “What if this is indeed only Act 1, Will?”

You smirk and leave, not needing to look back to lock onto his thundering heart, only loosing it when you enter the suburbs of Baltimore.

******

The thoughts churn in Will’s head, his face a mask of attentive indifference, carefully blank. Hannibal has taken the stand, testimony filled with double meanings and carefully phrased words, trying to direct the game, to have the judge accept the ‘gift of love’ from the other killer. Hannibal holds his gaze as he speaks the words and Will clenches his hands in his lap, unable to refrain from reacting. “Will Graham is, and will always be my friend.”

What a ‘friendship’ to have.
Not one he would have chosen had he known all the facts. An old saying flits through Will’s brain. ‘Family are the only enemies you cannot choose.’ Only that Hannibal is not family. Will refuses to frown, following the thought. Not a friend either. More than that already and wanting more. Always more.
His thoughts jump back to the other night, the way his body just succumbed to pleasure, nerves and brain cells firing through sheer input, overwhelming. He had hit the wall by utter instinct, needing distance, the peace descending brilliant and the resulting sleep dreamless and for once deep.
A friendship with benefits. And some questionable ones.

Will watches the way Hannibal’s face darkens as the judge refuses to accept their defense, unwilling to take their bait. An antlered shadow shifts into reality for an instant, Hannibal’s gait changed when he steps down from the stand oh so carefully. Will frowns and wants to shout into the room, “SEE?”, but refrains, his mental abilities debatable in the judge’s eyes already after all. And suddenly he knows what will happen, knows what Hannibal will do tonight.

His heartbeat speeds up, knowing Hannibal will be able to hear it, his hands sweating. He cannot bring himself to care too much for some reason though, his mind way too occupied with conjuring scenes for this, the various ways this could be turned into art.

Will licks his lips, tasting salt and missing the copper.
He refuses to admit to himself that he would love to see it.

******

You enter the building through the roof, Mendo giddy behind you.
How easily amused the young ones are.

He is still a bit pale and so you let him drink from the judge's chest, wound opened right over the heart and into the veins, the judge limp in your hands, thumbs pressing into his carotid. You let Mendo drink his fill, utterly unwilling to have a drop of this man yourself, but deeply amused when you smell Mendo's arousal.
Later.

You pull him off while the judge still lives, moaning between you. You calmly show Mendo how to properly remove the eyes with your fingers, the scream as you do ending abruptly as unconsciousness releases the old man, making you sigh. Not nearly long enough. You put the judge onto the desk, carefully opening up the robes. He is thin and a quick cut opens his torso immediately, the frantic heartbeat trying to recompense for the loss of blood and screaming nerves. You sigh and then shoot through the little wound, faking the cause. You offer the scalpel to Mendo and indicate where to cut, lifting the heart from the cavity, within moments, pleased when Mendo bends down and drinks down the rest of the blood directly from the veins, suckling until it's gone, preventing a huge mess.

You peel down the skin on the skull and then open it with a saw, the brain weirdly translucent and pale and… unimpressive in your hands.
Mendo turns it in his gloved hands, chuckling lightly. "Would we glean anything from eating it?"

You turn to him, a delighted smile playing on our mouth. "No. Our neurotransmitters can only interpret impressions stored in the molecules while we drink. The reason for this are the extra enzymes produced in our spit, connecting with charged molecules and redirecting them along different pathways before bodily consumption. Our brains then retranslate those molecule-combinations which gives us the impression of 'seeing' what our … donor has seen."

Mendo weighs his head. "So it is not truly a memory that's reliable?"

You take the brain back from him, placing it carefully onto the desk. "Reliable enough but charged with emotions. And, if someone had enough power, they would be able to direct what you can see."

He blinks, catching on immediately. "And change it?"

You smirk. “Sometimes.” You step over to the other desk and break it apart, taking the legs to shove them through the judge’s robe’s cuffs and down his tunic to make a makeshift cross. “But that would take an extremely strong mind. Normally, certain things and thoughts can only be hidden, kept from being transmitted, but not changed.” You click your tongue, turning towards him. “All things considered it is more practical to change a weaker coven member’s memories if you think they might give out information involuntarily. This can be done with simple tricks, after all. Our brains and psyches are not that dissimilar to human ones after all.”

Mendo hums, pulling down the scales from the bronze statue. “I saw a flashing light and a leather seat while you took me the other day. Were you employing these tricks then?”

You trace a finger along the ridges of the brain, the bronze scales falling from Mendo’s hands as you charge at him, pushing him at the wall, his ribs cracking under your hand, air pressed from him. You lean close, fangs fully displayed, eyes glowing, your voice very calm. “Maybe. One good advice, Mendo. Never loose my secrets.”
You let him go, calmly turning to finish the display, his presence muted a bit. You erect the display, the judge held up by lures, lifting the heart and the brain laid out in the scales, eyes covered by a strip of cloth you ripped from his undergarments.
Mendo exhales besides you when you are done, his tone wistful. “Cool.”
You pull a face, the modern attribute nothing you would have chosen. Or wanted to be chosen for describing this. You have a feeling Will might have chosen another one. You survey the room for evidence and Mendo looks at you and then fidgets, raising his eyebrows. “What am I to you?”

You turn towards him, pulling a glove off to lightly caress his jaw, before you drop it to his crotch, squeezing lightly. You soften the blow with a smile, brutal and quick. “A distraction.”

You draw him near by pulling him towards you with a half embrace, rushing out through the roof once more. The grass is wet with droplets of dew, drenching the pulled down clothing as you take him roughly prepared in a clearing, his cries swallowed by moss. You don’t reach out this time, this, this only for you. You take until he stills under you, surrendering completely, your teeth finding his neck only then, greedily pulling his visions of your art back into you.

This will be your only chance to revel after all.
As soon as Jack calls you will have to lie again.

You growl and bite down deeper.

******

The ravenstag shows him the way, feathers rustling, an immediate calming effect that has the dripping faucet change from a nuisance to a tickle, the bars cold at Will's sides as he steps outside, aware he is dreaming and yet unwilling to stop, the mighty beast navigating the narrow hallways with ease. The pull to follow it is almost irresistible and Will gives in slowly, his mind racing and yet numb, trying to find the meaning of what he is seeing.

The presence is scorching and there is no way he can ignore it, his name, softly spoken just an echo to the impression. He is there, arm guiding Will back into the cell, the perfectly crafted person suit meticulously set, proudly displayed.

Is it his subconscious, offering insights? Or is it one of those strange … instances when Will can feel more than he is, aware that he is reaching out somehow. What is the message here though. Will blinks and steps past Hannibal, the presence oppressive for a moment and then relenting.

The thought is bitter, fury following the realization. 'The ripper keeps me locked up, but if I… strengthen this… relationship with him… it will set me free.'

Molten lava trickles down Will's spine, his pulse thundering but nonetheless acknowledging the truth in the realization. Forcing him into a relationship. It would never be on equal footing. Especially with the supernatural background of it. Will wonders briefly if supernatural really means supernatural or if it is something genetic maybe. Or transmitted.
He inhales deeply. No matter, now.
Well, they will have to see about this, won't they.
He has to unlock his jaws with an effort, the muscles hurting.

Let's play then.
And win this deadly game.

Or die trying.

Will frowns, remembering Alana will visit him the next day, a plan unfolding slowly.
Let's start there.

Changes

Chapter Summary

The noose tightens and things change.

Chapter Notes

Sorry, delayed by Ravage proof reading :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The smell of paint and wood and steel is still heavy in the air.

“Virginal” the departing craftsman had called it and you had hid your annoyance at this description, only asking for his card. “Virginal” - such a stupid attribute for something pure, the origins in a body’s ability to close areas off until they’re used hardly something to be excited about in your opinion. You click your tongue and shake your head, well aware that others have lots of preferences for anything with this stamp on it though.

As if someone knowing what they do is not much, much better in the arts of physical pleasure.

One might as well fuck a piece of wood after all. Maybe that is why they prefer virgins though, the partner unable to judge them through lack of experience alone. You narrow your eyes, a hint of sardonic distaste on your lips before you forcefully return to the task at hand, the newly created pantry still very much empty.

The steel slab is polished down, the light from the glass refrigerators glinting off of it. The wine racks are black holes, covering all the walls and you smile, holding up the bottle of wine that Will has brought you way back when he was still hunting Tobias Budge. You trace your thumb along the imprinted letters, knowing you will drink it with him.
Eventually.
For now, you put the bottle into the wine rack, at eye level.
Something to remember every time you get one of your special blends.
Fondly.

You turn and your gaze falls onto the hardly visible lines of the trap door, installed by coven members, the mechanic almost silent when you press the button on the inner side of the left refrigerator. Theoretically someone could open the trap door without the button, but with the floor you have chosen they would need to know where to look.

And the mechanic can only be used if the finger prints match, otherwise issuing a silent alarm to your phone. Your neck tingles and you sigh, your voice amused. “Should I enter your finger prints into the system as well, Uncle?” You turn slowly, smiling just a bit. “Or do I need to call you master by now?”

Robertas chuckles, his voice deep, vocal cords saturated with blood. Well fed indeed. “No thank you, Hannibal, and if I recall correctly, you never called Lucille this either…” He drags a polished nail along the steel surface of the slab before locking eyes with you. “Thank you for…”, he hesitates a sinful and yet boyish grin flitting over his features, making him seem impossibly young, “for keeping Mendo so occupied.” He licks along his teeth, fully on display. “And for teaching him so well.”

You incline your head with a small smile, your mind racing what Robertas might have done for which he wanted Mendo occupied. You shrug internally, resigning yourself to know when he will tell you, coven business not exactly your favorite subject after all.

Robertas steps over and looks down into the sub-pantry, the narrow stair leading to the actual heart of the kitchen, also still very much empty. “Very well adapted the available basement space I see…”
He jumps down and you follow, the air displacement ruffling the hanging sheets of plastic surrounding the slaughter table. Light flickers bright as Robertas clicks it on, whistling low under his breath. “Planning another feast soon?” He shoots you a look, indicating the hooks at the ceiling. “These will take some time to fill…”

You nod, stepping closer. “Yes, I will need to make preparations if this should be a proper food supply.” You hesitate and then add, your voice dripping honey. “ For humans and vampires alike, of course.”
Robertas raises an eyebrow. “Of course”, he chuckles, turning to the stairs up, “and of course I wouldn’t dare come by to a new kill room without the proper housewarming gifts…”
He rushes up and you smile at the sight when he reappears, arms laden with bottles and various specimens of snails in glass containers. “May I present - some of Lucille’s own stash.” He licks his teeth, watching you with red eyes. “I think the irony must have felt very just to you, didn’t it?”

You shrug slightly, taking one of the snail containers from him. “Her being poisoned by a mixture of the very poisons she herself tried to distill?” You put the container on one of the shelves, tracing the smooth surface with a content sigh. “Absolutely.”

Robertas hums, puts the gifts onto the table and then rushes once more, reappearing with a big box, the smell of it revealing the contents quite easily. Your fangs throb, a rush of anger and elation coursing through you. Robertas puts it down and then clasps your shoulder, voice quiet. “I needed it to be someone you would like to devour… when some of the coven mentioned this individual’s preferences for an overhauled morale codex I knew you would put him into your rolodex.”

He lifts the lid and the smell of freshly bled dry and dismantled body wafts up, the coppery aroma almost clean. “You washed and cleaned him prior to his death.” You reach into the box, pulling out the head, studying the fogged eyes for a moment. “How did you kill him?”

Robertas grins, leaning close to whisper. “A surprise breaking of his neck. I did not wish for fear to taint the meat.” He straightens back up, releasing a long sigh. “I must admit, I was afraid you would be more… resentful of my gift.” A quick look at you that you decide to ignore. “Mendo I mean. It was a shot deliberately close to home…”

You raise your eyebrows, inclining your head just a fraction. “Indeed. And one I recognized. However, I believe… I was able to make good use of him - in more ways than one and hence… a welcome gift.”
Robertas hesitates for a moment, his eyes dark red. “Good. I was afraid you would see it more as an attempt to break the bond than a distraction.”
You tilt your head, frowning slightly. “You should be aware that a conjoining can only be broken from the conjoining parties, Uncle. And I have no intention to break it.”
Robertas looks down for just a moment. “And what of him?”
“Him?”
An annoyed glance and an aborted shake of his head. “Your desired. Will Graham.”
You turn to face him, confusion allowed to etch into your expression. “Whatever do you mean, Uncle.”
Robertas sighs through his nose, his eyes boring into yours. “You said you are conjoining. You said you can already share your mind and sensations from time to time, which is beyond unusual.” A pause in which you can hear the clock ticking up in the dining room. “How will he react when he learns that you not only framed him, tried to mold his mind -and- betrayed him in this way as well?”
You laugh a laugh that is definitely not a resentful cackle, your voice gruff. “He and I are beyond petty jealousies.”
Robertas clicks his tongue. “Oh, really.”
Your eyes flash, your tone mirroring your irritation. “Yes, really, Uncle.”
Robertas pinches the bridge of his nose, his voice a bit muffled behind his hand. “I do hope you’re right, Hannibal. Please do remember that he is mortal still, though. Even if he is indeed conjoining already, even if he has gleaned some insights, even if he has managed to rip the veil a bit - he is still mortal, and caught in their mindsets. You would do well to remember that.”

You turn abruptly, hackles raised. “I see the time as coven master has already made you paranoid, Uncle.”
His hand shoots up, gripping you by the throat, lifting you up into the air before he pulls you back in, your glowing-red eyes matching his and locked firmly. “I would advise you to mind your tongue, Hannibal. Blood-bourne and family or not, I will not accept insolence.”
He shoves you away and only then you dare to acknowledge the pain in your throat, the blood where it trails down from miniature fingernail wounds. You know he is correct of course, he has shown you a tremendous lenience already.
Your voice is rough, words rasping like on sand paper. “I apologize.”

Robertas sighs and then steps back, turning towards the entrance. “Get your papers together, Hannibal. Create passports and safe houses, for him as well if you wish, but get ready to move. If you are … not correct, this will be nasty.” He looks back at you, his eyes lowered. “Therefore, this is an order.” He looks up, his gaze leaving no doubt. “As your coven master I demand you prepare to depart this life. If necessary.”

You hold his gaze for a long time and then nod, once, slowly, not managing to hide your sneer. A rush of air and Robertas is gone, leaving corpse limbs, snails, wine and resentment behind. Nonetheless, you call the coven lawyers later that night. It would not do to get into a feud over that stupid a thing.

******

The dream is a recurring one. Her smile is sweet, easy, more easy than it ever was in life. Water rushes, the fishes bite easily.
He names the lure and aware he uses the wrong name.
He hopes it will be enough.

****

Beverly visits him, needing him, again. He gives her the answers but she doesn't want to hear it, not really. His eyes are open, unblinking, the scene remote, his own words echoing in his ear: "He has no discernible reason other than his own amusement and curiosity."
'Not true, not true, not true, not true' echoes through his brain, followed by an emotion he can't name. He drops down onto his dirty mattress when she leaves again, having promised to look for 'clever details', his hands coming up to rub his temples.
If it isn't amusement and curiosity… what else could it possibly be?"
Will closes is eyes for a moment, remembering the looks, the little touches, the … dreams. The conversations. It's not only lust either. Though that is part of it and the thought makes Will swallow harshly. For a moment his mind opens and mirrors, a generous mouth pressing onto his, stubble scratching his own, a wet tongue flicking against his own. Will shakes his head, drawing a shaking breath, annoyed at himself. No way this manipulative bastard will get his way. He clenches his fists, the muscles in his jaw jumping.

For now, a restricted access wouldn't hurt. Will narrows his eyes, his mind rushing through ways to best influence Dr. Chilton.

******

Mrs. Katz has asked for your help in the mural case, her questions cleverly hiding the real inquiries. You give her enough to up the ante.
If she is clever she will find it.

Adding more spice to the game is invigorating.
Maybe preparing a clean exit has its advantages as well.

******

For once Chilton seems to have kept his word and so Will keeps his as well, allowing for the drug to be administered. He doesn't even bother to read the small print, he is fairly certain it is to his disadvantage anyways.
The lights expand, the sounds echoing away, the drums of his heart pushing the other sounds away. The light flickers, interlaces with other, more bluish tinged light, the phantom sensation of sweat running down his temples mixing with the impression of a dry mouth and labored breaths. There is a prick on his arm and his unfocused gaze falls down, watching Hannibal's face shift into a Picasso caricature of it. Another rush as the memory drug rushes through him, the light metronome triggering miniature fits.
Pressure as the needle is pulled out and then the twisted memory takes a turn into the absurd as Hannibal's eyes flare red, his mouth dropping open, fangs extending down as if in slow motion, a tongue pushing through them. Hannibal bends forward and though Will cannot see the sensation of gliding wetness, paired with a slight sting and sucking pressure on his arm is an indistinct trigger of arousal.
He jerks and jolts back into reality, gasping for air, trying to get his bearings.

He spits the truth out to Chilton, needing to say it out loud.

So he was right, after all.
The fucking bastard.

******

When you return to the BSHCI, the doors don't open.
It's not often you are not allowed to come in and you clench your teeth for a moment, wondering what you might need to do to persuade the guards when Chilton comes by.

He explains the situation, suavely, enjoying himself way too much for your tastes.
Unfortunately you cannot just kill him… you might have need of him yet.

And still.
You swallow the rage down to be revived at a later point.

You drive out to Miriam and Abigail that day, making sure they are well fed and prepared.
Abigail watches the light therapy from afar, the wound at the left side of her head almost

fully healed. When you look over she looks away with a brittle smile, before retrieving her jacket and going out, her gaze on the waves far below. The wind plays with her hair, making it a dark halo.
You finish the session with Miriam and release her to a nap, before you follow Abigail out, proud of her when she holds her ground when you step up to her. “You do not need to be scared of the cliff, you do know that.”
She nods jerkily, waving towards the edge of the terrace. “Yeah, Robertas told us there was a net a few meters down just in case. Still, the cliff is crumbling, it probably won’t hold forever.” Her blue eyes flash up to you, wide and inquiring, unable to use words.
You nod, confirming. “Indeed. Maybe another year before the fastenings fail. Time will tell.”
You turn away slightly, smoothing down her hair. “That will not be your fate, Abigail, tumbling down this cliff. Nor will it be Miriam’s.” You smile at her and watch her relax, feeling a weird sensation in the pit of your stomach when you turn away.
You frown, trying to pin it down but it stays just out of reach, just beyond grasp.

Annoyance opens the gate to embarrassed rejection and rage, a silent companion as you leave again, the Bentley returning you to Baltimore just as night falls. You inhale the night air and then rush out, a shot of heroine and blood lightening your mood. It’s not overly sanitary but you couldn’t care less right now. Your teeth rip deep and you leave the body to the stray dogs, making it easier by dropping some treats onto the corpse.

You refuse to dwell on the thought why you still have dog treats in your coat, sealed away in a little plastic back and rush home, resigned to spend the evening alone, filling up your pantry.
At least the bacon will be very good eventually.
And the snails like the basement room as well.

******

‘Please don’t lie to me.’
Reality shifts as the bars give away, the memory frightfully real, the cold sweat on Will’s hot skin as freezing as the iron bars that he pushes out. Warm hands reach out and touch him, pull at his eyelids and press gently on the sides of his throat, taking his pulse. Will swallows, watching himself lean into the touch, even subconsciously, the tingling sensation echoed in remembrance.

So he had had a seizure back then. Mild… Will locks his jaw, his mind replaying the memory from another perspective, the… banter between Hannibal and Gideon, his heart beating in his throat.

This dream Hannibal addresses him, jars him back into reality with it as well. Will covers his eyes for a moment, his mind racing. So… Hannibal let Gideon go. And then… what. How long did he stand there? What happened in between? Hannibal had sent him after Gideon. Will swallows, tasting bile on his tongue. He had let his keys on the table, knowing Will

would take them.
He had sent Will to kill Gideon.

And even in his befuddled state Will had known better, had refused the implicit intent, had only shot to hurt, to disarm. To protect.
Will's lips twitch into a vicious smile, despite the emotional turmoil he feels.
A deadly game indeed.

******

Beverly comes by and confirms Will's suspicions regarding the trophies.
Panic and bile rises on the realization of what exactly he has been eating indeed, has been -fed-, as well as fury at… Hannibal, for doing it. And himself. For not thinking of it earlier. For making the connection to the ripper, the copycat and -not- connecting it all. He tries to persuade her to not bait Hannibal further, to take the safe route, but it is of no use. Will watches as Beverly frowns down at her evidence, having denied his request to go to Jack first. For a weird reason her refusal makes him feel detached instead of incensed, like a watcher from the outside.
He has cried wolf, without crying falsely before. And yet…
He watches her pack her stuff with a tight lipped little smile, apologetic and ferociously determined, wondering what Hannibal thinks of his own cannibalism. But then… it's only cannibalism if they're equals, isn't it. And Hannibal really isn't.

He closes his eyes with a sad, wry smile as she leaves, his heart beating wildly in his chest. The steel of the handcuffs is cold against his wrist, grounding him a bit, his neck tingling with antlers that just itch to tear free.

******

Bella is radiant, her gift sheer purity, her countenance a refined delight of wisdom and despair.
Death becomes her.

You flip the coin, wondering if you should allow her to pay the ferryman with it, her instincts having identified you as Charon easily. Truly delightful. The coin tumbles and turns, a silver flash on your retina. Her entry is not on divine grounds, though, and she has to keep Jack distracted still.

When the coin lands the decision has already been made, her and your plight changing abruptly.

******

You smell her even before you enter your house, the leather of her jacket slightly damp from the early morning's humidity.
Of course she would note the pantry.
You silently put away your cloak and scarf, keeping your steps inaudible.
Maybe, if she does not find the sub-pantry, you can toy with her a while longer.
A sharp mind is delightful after all.

The smell of sloshing wine and you almost sigh, for spilled wine and wasted life alike. Whatever will happen, you will honor her. Of course, you … could surprise her now, have her leave your home. But she would only be back, having seen the trapdoor already. And you know for a fact she hasn't talked to Jack. Yet.
You lightly click your tongue and follow the sound of the trapdoor opening through the dining room, her steps down the stairs quiet but determined. Light flickers and you hear her inhale, the sharp stutter of her breath as she takes your real pantry in.

You imagine what she sees now: the cut off foot still in the little bucket to the side, the steel slab table, obviously a kill table for dismemberment, the snails on the limbs hanging from the ceiling in the back, the 'bacon' on the other side. The rows and rows of bottled blood. The glass container with the severed head.

All things considered she takes it well.
Unfortunately, you cannot have her make the call.
You drop down, the displacement of air making her whirl around.
You reach for the lights just as the gun locks.

She never has a chance. The bullets rip through the floor instead of you, your hands pushing her arms up and whirling her around. Another thing to fix with the covens craftsmen. You growl to yourself. Her eyes are wide and unseeing on you, there in the dark, growing darker the harder your fingers press, soundlessly struggling wildly.

When she dies, you can see your own eyes' glow reflected back from the mirror of her soul.

It is a quick death, all things considered, following the quick unconsciousness, that has her limp in your arms. There is nothing but respect for her after all.
In another life, you could have been friends.
Not this one, though.

You hold her in your arms for a long moment when she is gone, your mind buzzing with possibilities. The phrase makes you smirk and you rush up and out, glad it is still dark, the stables a way off after all.

You put her into the big quick-freezer there, check the blades on the buzz saw. A scene from a movie flits through your mind. You will need glass slabs to display her in all her glory. You hesitate and then turn, taking her out again for a moment, the kidneys easily removed. You leave them there, next to the freezer, to be collected later.

You take the emergency van, resigning yourself to set it up by yourself. Luckily Sebastian keeps glass slabs for displays as well, the big vampire dancing in front of his chemical experiments with headphones on, waving you away when you indicate his stash at the back of the laboratory. He catches your eyes though and licks his lips, making you chuckle.
You take the glass slabs back, preparing fastenings so they will be able to contain her slices.

Your gaze falls onto the hole in the back, covered by a thick, steel trapdoor.
Perfect as a stage.

You start the saw up, watching it whirr.
You put the kidneys away for later, and set to work.

You wonder if they will let him see it. What he will see.
If this will change anything between you.

What he will do.

The thought makes your heartbeat thunder.

Chapter End Notes

whispers yay, THAT episode coming up..... :))

Onslaughts

Chapter Summary

Changes bearing ripples, bringing repercussions :)

The early sun's rays fall through your kitchen windows, prickling on your skin. You take a cup and fill it with some AB positive from the bottle you received from Sebastian, warming it a bit in the microwave, hidden in a cupboard.
It's really the only time you use the machine.

Sebastian had been very much pleased to receive the organ, in exchange for the promise for you to cook it for and with him, later.
Time to try out the new kidney pie recipe.
You turn towards the refrigerator when you hear the big car pull up, the engine stopping with a gentle rumble and soft click right in front of your house.

So, breakfast with Jack first.
You don't feel inclined to share the kidney with him though.
He'll get some scrambled eggs and bacon in return for his trust.
He has to keep up his strength.

They'll call him soon enough after all.
Freddie should be on it already.

******

Deafening silence, the words dropping into the pool of Will's mind, hardly causing ripples.
It's cold under the surface, numb, the echo of emotions, just out of reach.
Something black lurks down there, something gathering strength, locking itself in the pits of Will's stomach, clawing up Will's spine, something with teeth and sinister energy, frenzied to lash out.

Save yourself, kill them all.
That's what he did, isn't it.
Not all though, just one of the pieces off the chessboard so he could continue to play.
Will locks his jaw, his gaze drifting over to the light, the image of Beverly so solid and true within it. At least she is in the light now.

He has to see though.
He has to see if he honored her.
Or shamed her.

Will swallows.
Everything depends on intent, doesn't it?

He returns his gaze to Jack, eyes lowered, his words very quiet, brooking no argument: "I have to see her." He knows they'll let him. It's why they're here after all, to use him. Another chance to cry wolf. He knows he is right when Alana lowers her eyes, Jack nodding silently.

The trip is silent, gestures used more often than words, the orderlies taking their cues from Jack, who is a silently brooding, turning his back to lead the way with his own car.

Being constrained is weirdly freeing somehow. Strapped onto the gurney in a moving car, movements and sounds inconsequential, bite-mask fogging Will's mind is curiously calm, watching the sun glinting off glass and metal. She must have come so close. What did she see?
What did he allow her to see?
He tries to reach for the blackness inside him, the fury and anger, but it doesn't come, the fatalistic meaning of the situation equaling a resolution somehow.

The air is crisp and golden when they take him out, manhandle him into the observatory.

The room explodes with a buzz.
Too many people, too many impressions, too many emotions, too many smells. Reality draws in onto itself, the bubble shrinking, Jack's booming voice shattering it. "Everybody out."

His eyes bore into Will's, the intensity in it finally something Will is able to reach for. He breathes deeply when Jack pulls him up, removes the strappings matter-of-factly.
He steps forward, allows the visual impressions he blankly observed before to enter his consciousness, the image forming, the meaning blatantly clear.

He honored her.

Hannibal honored her, complimented her even, the display clean and immaculate, the glass surfaces gleaming. Will tells himself it is not relief that rushes through him, can not be after all, forcing it down by pushing up disgust, presenting the grief, the lines of his face harsh. Jack leaves quietly and when the door below clicks the mask shatters and Will rubs his face with a shivering sigh, the need to pretend gone, dauntingly freeing.

Beverly blurs into existence in his mind, prompting him to see, to interpret. He looks at the display with heavy-lidded eyes, knowing she is asking him to relive her death.
To kill her.
To display her.

The nerves in his fingertips tingle, his spine rigid.
The pendulum swings and Beverly reassembles herself, the thuds as the slices adjoin like

galloping heartbeats. Will watches her come alive, waiting, cultivating the impulse. To honor her he does not wish to leave marks, and the nature of their work relationship demands an intimate verdict, heat rushing through him, adrenaline kicking in. Her hair smells faintly of apple shampoo, the leather of her jacket still carrying the scent of winter winds. Her eyes find his, terrified and brutally aware, fingers trying to pull his hand away, the superior strength making it an unmovable object.
It takes longer this way but he can enjoy her -seeing-, can see his own reflections in her eyes. The rush of power as her gaze breaks is furiously delicious, carried on necessity and the faint regret to loose a sparring partner.
And delight, running through him at the prospect of making her into art.

Appetite lets the antlers grown and Will watches the Wendigo move just beyond her, it's meaning so clear now. "But what did I take from her?"

He blinks and reality reassembles itself, bathed in golden hues, replacing the freezing coldness of the recreation. He frowns when he realizes the appetite is still there, the lingering trace of copper on his tongue. He tries to be disgusted and fails, Jack's steps shattering the train of thoughts, forcing him to discuss the same cries of wolf once more.

In the end, he is mourning and furious, seething anger just beyond the bone deep exhaustion. The problem is, he is not quite sure whether it is really directed at Hannibal - or at Jack.

It must be directed at Hannibal. It must.

******

The therapy cage are cold, the orderly bringing him in watching him intensely. Will ignores it, sinking down onto the seat with a sigh, using the motes of dust floating in the air to zone out, try to sort his feelings and thoughts, jumbled as they are.
Hannibal just changed the rules by killing Beverly, attacking the team directly. Will knows he is other, something different than normal humans, and even willing to display some of those particularities if Will is around. Will swallows, his throat dry. Hannibal wants him, in bed and in life and therapy chair probably and… Will frowns, shaking his head slightly.
There is something he is missing.

What does Hannibal really want?

What is so important to him that he would kill Beverly not to risk it?
It's not this life after all… not Hannibal's career either.
It could just be 'fun'. Entertainment. Will sneers, his eyes flashing. 'The sheer hubris.'
He hears the buzz sound, the click of the cane on the floor.
Time to endure another round of 'therapy' with Dr. Chilton. Will sighs through his nose.
Maybe he can start using him to get at Hannibal. Somehow. One way or another.
Time to put an end to this nonsense.
Let Hannibal focus on him alone.

He inhales and clasps his hands.
A good opportunity to speak with Gideon.

******

The meat is delicious, the slightly acidic taste a testament to the slow kill, the way she looked you in the eye. You smile as you chew, knowing Sebastian will be delighted.
You just hope he has a proper kitchen beyond that lab.
Somewhere.

Well. The recipe should be easy to prepare.
Even in a lab.

******

"You have it 'in you' as they say."
Gideon's voice is soft, salacious, dripping with refusal and sarcasm. He is not wrong though and so Will drops this avenue, resolve hardening in his gut. Smoke and mirrors, indeed. "Fair enough."
He will just find a way to stop this nonsense. To disrupt this game. To kill the Devil.
It might not kill Hannibal… but it might stop the Ripper.

Will lowers his head a fraction, his jaw aching.

******

He comes to you under the pretense of warning, of a need for guidance.
It's a good thing you have quite a few bottles more of this cognac.
You complement him for bringing back Gideon while silently toasting to Will. An ingenious move, really, trying to use the only witness between them both.
You will have to try to see if Gideon is clever enough not to spill.

Time will tell if he can keep his tongue.
And limbs.

******

There is the tickling of a presence in the back of his mind, like ghost fingers, running down his spine. Becoming increasingly familiar. Hannibal is here. Will pulls a face, knowing he will have met Freddie then, probably just outside.
He sighs through his nose, waiting for the sound of her heels on the floor.
Maybe it is a good thing though. The Ripper… the beast in the man will pay extra attention to her now. Will smiles grimly, forcing himself to relax.
It's time to play the killers.
Let's see how able his admirer is.

******

It happens faster than Will thinks it would, the time for an inspection of his cell totally wrong. The hands putting his fastenings on do not exactly shake but fumble just the tiniest bit, the man behind him breathing too fast. Bingo.
Will puts his shoulders forward, following every push, every pull, easily submitting to the presence behind him. He sits down in the cage, eyes unseeing in front of him, hands clasped. Non-threatening. Yielding to the greater power. He waits.

The warden circles him, coming to just behind him, his gaze burning Will's neck. What does he try to see? Will keeps still, waiting for his cue, playing to the ego by pretending to be unsuspecting. Let him think he is pulling all the threads.
It doesn't take long.

Will is silent as the warden, 'Matthew, right?', laments the lack of understanding, echoing the compliment on his choice of hiding place. It's easy to talk to him and Will enters the discussion carefully, checking the trappings. With the microphones disable it is finally possible to speak freely and so Will just asks, needing to know. "And the judge?"
Matthew seems embarrassed, body language slightly defensive. "I killed the bailiff. The judge was… somebody else."
So Will had been right. Had known immediately. Had felt it. Had not dared to vocalize it. He follows the invitation of the open door and stretches his limbs, using the time to collect his thoughts. Easy now.
The words rush up to him, the hope they were infused with brittle and addictive. "Imagine if the hawks started working together."
Imagine indeed.
Will suppresses the smile, keeping his posture deliberately unthreatening. He walks down the hall with Matthew, matching his steps, echoing his gestures, just a bit, just to trigger recognition, the sensation of 'kin'. Their shoulders brush when they reach the hallway to Will's cell and he knows it is now or never and when Matthew just asks, Will's states very quiet, very sure. "I want you to kill Hannibal Lecter."

He exhales when Matthew smirks and turns away, suddenly elated by a game well played. Whatever the outcome of this move, pitching two killers against each other is just…

exhilarating.
He'll have to make sure there will be even ground though. Somehow.

******

The light in Will's cell flickers in irregular intervals, the sudden burst of photons like lightning across his retina just before blue darkness falls, the split second threading veins through the image of reality. He is staring right ahead, his breathing shallow, a low panic somewhere deep in his guts. He must speak with Matthew once more, just once before he sets whatever he wants to do into motion. He has to … make sure he does. Will shivers, goosebumps racing down his spine, fingernails tapping each vertebrae, spreading out across his back, the pinpoint prickle of hot needles.
Will gasps, falling forward onto the ground on all fours, pulling is clothing off with shaking fingers. The feeling of cold hotness intensifies, his hand pressing down on it, trying to find the pressure. And then the skin breaks, white-hot searing pain bringing relief to pressure and the salty tang of blood trickling down, the thing within Will uncoiling, rushing through his veins, up, up, up and out, for all the world to see.
The antlers spread like a dark thicket, thorny and oily, black and fanged tips interlocking with the curls at his nape. Will gasps and undulates, his eyes wide and unseeing on the wall across, the shadows dancing there with every breath he takes.
A thicket of thorns, piercing his mind, lethal and unyielding and yet adaptive, ready to … to what. Will blinks slowly, breathing through his mouth, absent-mindedly grateful that Frederick only uses audio surveillance. His hands clench, nails digging into the ground, the left ring finger nail breaking. The slight pain refocuses him a bit, the weight of the antlers coming down, pressing, creaking when he grunts and bears it, rounding his back.
No. He will bear this weight. Will blinks again, lowering his head, feeling the antlers grow a bit more, the tallest ones scratching the ceiling, bringing even more weight down. He grits his teeth and holds, his body shaking with the stress and effort, arms locked. It would be so easy to give in, to let them fade away, to dismiss their meaning.
But no, not this time. Will snarls and pushes up, the cracking turning to sliding shifts as the antlers rearrange themselves, accommodating him.
This time, he'll push back.
And bear the weight of responsibility for it.

The buzzer sounds and Will closes his eyes, smiling grimly. Cold air hits his clammy skin, the copper fading, leaving only clear tracks of sweat behind, the weight shifting to drop into his spine, making it rigid. He pushes up, chest heaving from the effort still, mouth drawn.

Matthew saunters over to his cell, playing with the keys, his flat eyes flickering back and forth, licking his lips. He observes Will unashamedly and Will narrows his eyes, filtering this information away as well, ready to be used.
Matthew grins, his voice just vaguely amused. "Some late afternoon workout, Mr. Graham?" He clicks his tongue. "No worries, Mr. Chilton only hears you snoring… And Dr. Gideon is in the cage as you know." Matthew chuckles. "I hear Dr. Chilton is letting him stew a bit

there, while he has him here under his control…"
Ah. Will shrugs, keeping his posture straight but shoulders down and forward, unthreatening. "Something like that." He pauses, forcing himself to offer a smile, sitting fake on his lips. "Like what you see?"
Matthew tilts his head, lips pursed. "I see a carefully crafted disguise… there is more that you need to tell me, isn't there, Mr. Graham."
Will raises his eyebrows, appreciating the candor, slowly straightening up fully. "There is. I'm glad I didn't misjudge you." He tilts his head, the smile not quite as fake this time. "Or your abilities." He swallows, exhaling before he continues, choosing his words carefully. "This is no ordinary… task. He… may not know you are coming, but you will need to enter this encounter with cunning, not brute force." His eyes lock with Matthew's for a moment before flickering away, watching the shadows beyond his cell.
Matthew jingles the keys in his hand again, the tinkling sound echoing hollowly. "He is no ordinary foe… I am aware." A wide grin, eyes sparkling. "Is he who killed the judge?"
Will blinks, making sure to make eye contact as he raises his gaze. "I believe so."
Matthew tilts his head. "Another admirer of yours, then."
Will's smile is brittle. "Something along those lines…" He swallows. And more. He narrows his eyes and briefly ponders to play this card to make Matthew jealous but then discards the thought as too… base. It wouldn't sit right. Somehow. He inhales deeply. "Ok, bear with me." He turns away slightly, pacing while he recites, arms crossed. "You have to use poison. Something necrotic, maybe a snake poison." He swallows. "That should help." He shoots a look over at Matthew, watching him with a rapt expression on his face, fascination openly displayed. "And you have to use heavy narcotics to even have a chance at getting at him. Something from the veterinary." He raises his eyebrows, emphasizing heavily. "For horses."
Matthew tilts his head, lips pursed in a delighted smile. "I see… anything else?"
Will unlocks his arms, steps up to the bars, his fingers gripping the iron. "Just… don't take this easy." He lowers his voice, knowing he has Matthew reeled in when he steps closer, watching intently. "You are a hawk indeed - but so is he."
Matthew steps even closer, body heat warming the skin on Will's fingers. "Is he what you claim he is?"
Will exhales, his snarl almost instinctual. "And more."
Matthew hums, gaze flickering, his smirk cruel. "Good." He taps the bars twice and then steps back, flicking his keys once more. "A good thing I tapped his car… I think I will go into town and visit a friend for the … support you mentioned." He turns away, calling back over his shoulder. "Good night, Mr. Graham. Sweet dreams."

Will lowers his head, forehead against the bars, trying to control his breathing. He shivers, adrenaline dropping away, dread and excitement and ferocious feelings of wrath and vigilant righteousness settling deep in his gut.

He sits back down on his bunk and pulls his clothes back up, vaguely disappointed when they don't get soiled with red.

******

Her perfume is the first thing that arrives, too good, too pure for this place.
Will inhales deeply and then opens his eyes, suddenly aware that she called for him.
She is beautiful, all dark and blue and fair and dipped in sorrow. Sorrow for what has been destroyed already, sorrow for someone Will cannot conjure up to show her right now. Maybe that man has never really existed. Maybe the mask has only dropped and shattered on the floor in the Observatory. Whatever the reason, he doesn't want to hear her sorry, hear her pity. Not right now, not now when he has sent a killer after Hannibal.
Something tugs at his heart but he ignores it, pushes the feelings of vindictiveness and righteousness forward. "Beverly died because of me. Because she listened to me. I won't let that happen again."
It scares her and isn't that exhilarating?, her gaze turning a burning blue. "Will. What have you done?"
He turns forward, puts his face down, tries to find an equilibrium in the midst of the raving feelings that fight in his gut. "What I had to do."

It's so true it hurts.
And yet.

Will closes his eyes and conjures the stream, her clicking heels turning to gurgling water.

******

It has its perks to be a high coven member, the swimming pool almost mortal free, a few very well built individuals the exceptions. They always allow them, a handful, no more, to tick the appetite.
Some will not return home tonight, though they will be very carefully not taken home from here.
You turn and swim another round, the feeling of the cool water caressing your skin, muscles stretching, pulling, in a workout that is not really needed and yet nonetheless satisfactory. Cleansing.
You hear another member flirt with a young woman, her laughter true, fascinated. A negative. Your teeth throb and you push off again, your senses following them leaving the bathing house, leisurely tracking them to the parking lot where the heartbeats separate.
Not tonight then.
Anticipation is the key.
You smile to yourself and close your eyes behind the goggles, allowing your senses to expand all around you. Only one mortal close to you now, his heartbeat slightly elevated, watching you. You turn and push off, the ripples of his jacknife dive pushing along your ribs. He is trying to outdo you and doing an admirably pace, his body heaving through the little waves you two produce.
If it were -him- you would turn and dive toward him, wet skin on wet skin, breathing a bad habit.
You smirk to yourself and let him win, grinning when the mortal hits first and climbs out, his breaths audible even under water. You catch a glimpse of his muscular body, deciding to

appreciate the candor and swim back, wanting to see what he does next. You resurface, remember to breathe and reach up and push your goggles to your forehead, frowning when the heartbeat behind you speeds up.
A pinprick sensation and you try to reach, the dart very well placed, indeed. You look up and suddenly you recognize him, recognize the expression of satisfaction on his face, the sheer exultance to have successfully caught you.
A warden.
Will's warden.
Will sent someone to kill you.

Reality wavers and if you had control over your limbs still, you would smile.

******

Focus returns with the brutality of a train, running you over.
Your heart thunders in your chest, the sensation of a throbbing headache torturing you right behind your eyes, lightning zig-zagging across your vision. Your throat aches where the hemp rope cuts into it, nothing compared to the long cuts along your extended forearms, the necrotic poison keeping the wounds from healing.
Very well done, indeed.
You wonder if he came up with this himself.

You swallow against the pressure, pulling a grimace, aware of the surveillance cameras, forcing you to keep the charade. Not that you would be able to break free right now for sheer loss of blood, but words still have to be chosen carefully if you wish to keep in Baltimore for a while longer.
Such a shame.
Robertas will have a field day with this.

Speaking of which. You wonder when he will show up.
You sigh through your nose, trying to balance on the stupid bucket, your blood running down the floor.
Matthew turns towards you slowly, his tone mocking. "Judas had the decency to hang himself in shame at his betrayals. But I thought you'd need help." He smirks. "Did you know that the phrase "to kick the bucket" came from exactly this situation? You could kick it away now yourself and it'd all be over. Quicker than bleeding out. It's a choice. Life is about choices. Good choices. Bad choices."

You narrow your eyes, deciding to let him know you've recognized him, interested in his reaction. "You're a nurse at the hospital. You're setting a standard of care. " You laugh to yourself, a bit annoyed when he doesn't even look at you. Time to trigger him a bit. "Will Graham is not what you think." You close your eyes, infuse your face with an expression of sad serenity. "He's not a murderer."
That does it. Matthew turns to you, voice very firm. "He is now." He does an aborted curtsey. "At least by proxy."

So it is as you suspected. Hoped. Still, you have to sound surprised. “He asked you to do this?”
His tone is slightly sarcastic. “What are friends for?”
Indeed. Though you suspect Will didn’t have to bake a kidney pie for Matthew. You wonder what Matthew wants to get out of this and it sharpens your emotions, low-key annoyance entering the elation. His question pulls you back.
“Now I'm going to ask you a few yes- or-no questions while you still have enough blood coursing through your brain to answer them. Ready?”
You almost smile. Your body is slowly repairing itself already, the wounds tingling, veins refilling. It’s an effort to keep the voice weak. “Ready.”
Matthew goes down to his knees, locking eyes with you, fascination clearly on his face. “Did you kill that judge?” He pauses, the smirk on his face showing clearly that he got the answer he was looking for. You narrow your eyes and he continues, way too smug and self secure now, stepping up to you. “I can ask you yes-or-no questions, you don't have to say a word and I'll know what the answer is. The pupil dilates with specific mental efforts. You dilate, that's a ‘yes.’ No dilation equals ‘no.’”
He looks at the rope around your neck, and then up at you, his expression already knowing but pretending to want to know. “Are you the Chesapeake Ripper?”
You refrain from answering, knowing your eyes will give you away right now, your weakened state not allowing for full body control.
Matthew smiles and exhales, childlike wonder mixing with the deep fascination. He asks you, smirking, the words tinged with salacious irony, “How many times have you seen someone cling on to a life not really worth living? Eking out a last few seconds. Wondering why they bother.”
His self-satisfaction is getting on your nerves. You move your head in the sling, rolling your neck as much as you can, your voice derisive. “I know why. Life is precious.” As his life will be in a few minutes. The wounds in your arms tingle, the lower tissue scarring but closing. You’ll keep the scars but this charade will be over real soon.

Matthew grins at you, spreading his arms, fully satisfied with the display of misery you give him. You ache to rip him apart. “Look at you. The Chesapeake Ripper.” He tilts his head, tone light. “Wonder what they'll call me. The Iroquois used to eat their enemies to take their strength. Maybe your murders become my murders. I'll be the Chesapeake Ripper now.”
You look at him with contempt, your voice very quiet. Too quiet, your muscles testing the bonds already, the beast roaring back to life. “Only if you eat me.”

And then a drift of perfume and aftershave reaches you, pierces through the fog of your dulled senses, the still thundering heartbeat. Alana and Jack. You want to scream through clenched teeth, the hunger there, there, there, demanding, wanting, needing to break the bonds, to rip this man apart, to sate itself by drinking his life directly from his heart.

You feverishly wish.
But then you would have to leave this life, leave -him-.

The curses in your head are very expletive.

So instead of sinking your teeth into that delicious body you push the trembling back up into your voice, forcing it to quiver as you cry out: “He’s got a gun! Jack!”

The shots ring and you let Jack hold you, let Alana run for the ambulance, let them see you almost naked and defeated and traumatized.

It will only help the person suit you have donned after all.

A coven member peeks in and raises his eyebrows behind Jack's back and you glare at him, knowing what will happen now.

In a little while the cleaning crew will come in, pushing their minds onto the minds of the crime scene investigators, just as you will be brought to the ambulance. They will take over the crime scene, the Doctor in the ambulance will be a coven member as well, and there will be some providers to sink your teeth into, courtesy of the coven master, Robertas.

You will never hear the end of it.

******

Nights tend to be very dark in the cell, the lights switched off to infrared only, the hours ticking away. Slowly. Second by second by fucking second.
Will rolls over on his bunk, unable to sleep, his mind a buzz of static.
Matthew could be back any moment. Or Jack could come by. Alana.
Or Hannibal.
Will rolls over to the other side.
A while ago there had been something, some kind of shiver, a pull, a caress, a tickling.
Whatever. Will narrows his eyes, staring at the darkness, trying to imagine.
Did Matthew follow the suggestion? Did he use the proper medication? How did it go?
He rolls onto his back, fingers drumming onto his chest.
Isn't everything always a two-way-street?

The thought lingers, festering like some kind of disease, a virus, immune to any consoling thought, slowly spreading until it shifts into resolution, spurs Will into action. He locks his jaw, dropping his hands next to him onto the mattress, forcing himself to relax. The darkness behind his eyes matches the one outside and then, suddenly, it doesn't anymore, antlered red pulsing through it. They thread through reality, searching, searching until they lock onto something screaming red, something ravenous, pushes of red being pulled into the red hole, devoured, never to sate.
Will exhales a shuddering breath and pushes forward, the universe contracting to pull the red hole forward, heartbeat thunder branding up to Will's consciousness, pushing at him, abrasive and raw. He reaches and finally feels something familiar beyond the wet, glossy surface, a recognition, drowned in red.
Will's hands cramp on the bunk, realization falling like a lead ball.
Hannibal survived. Will withdraws a bit, watching, sees the red hole disengage from pulling more red, shifting and then pulling even more, a sensation of mental and physical pleasure thundering along their interweaving net of connective red.
Healing. And having fun while doing so.

Will arches into it for a long, long moment, teetering on the precipice, vacillating between joining and revulsion, repulsion and submersion.

An exhale like eternity's winds, toppling him over.

The anger is as sudden as it is vicious, black tar flowing unchecked from Will's soul right across the net, anger for Beverly, anger for himself, anger for every victim.
Anger for the lies.
Especially the lies.

More or less only the lies.

He screams through clenched teeth and pushes with all his might, viciously satisfied when the net ruptures the connection from the red hole to the pulsing red, pain and incredulous surprise clearly readable across their connection.
Will pushes again, snarling now, eyes scrunched shut, jamming all his fury into the red hole, the net screeching somehow, splintering apart, Will hurdling back into his own body, disoriented in the dark, gasping for air.

He cackles a laugh, turning into a full body laugh and he turns into a fetal position, sobs stealing into the laughter. He cries himself to sleep, exhaustion and disappointment and elation mixing overwhelmingly, his body cramping on the sobs, unheeded by any other living soul.

******

The city flies by, the nighttime skyline dotted with stars and mystery.
Robertas is silent next to you, the frown etched into his features, his driving style betraying his annoyance.

You take another sip from the coffee cup, the blood-spiced brew blended perfectly. Some obscure coffee beans from a very small organic farming company down in South America, going so well with blood. Well, you bet it won't be small for very much longer, the coven's lawyers apparently on it already.
You stretch a bit, the bandages on your forearms itching.
The scars will most likely stay, testament of shame for other coven members to see.
Well, it's shame in their eyes.
For you… you trace the line of the wound beneath the cloth, feeling the tingle on your damaged skin, a smile stealing itself across your face.

"What the hell are you smiling at, Hannibal?" Robertas shoots you an incredulous look, conveying pure irritation. "I just picked you up at a hospital as a -patient- I might add, disoriented, near slobbering and beyond beside yourself, with wounds given you by your 'intended'", he lifts two fingers from the steering wheel to indicate quote marks, "which, I

might add, will stay since the poison on the knives was necrotic, and the whole thing almost cost you your life here and you… smile?"

Your smile broadens, your gaze unseeing on the city beyond the windscreen. "Don't you see, Uncle? It's working."
Robertas huffs in annoyance, his tone incredulous. "What is working…"
Your teeth flash and you let them drop, uncaring, ignoring the provocation it might mean to Robertas. "My therapy, Uncle. Will has given into a dark impulse, has tried to kill. On purpose. And then he let me know so. By using our connection. And trying to finish me while I'm down. "
You close your eyes, letting your head fall back against the headrest, with a small sigh. "I wonder if he enjoyed it already." A thought flickers through your mind, your eyes reopening. "I won't be able to find out if he enjoyed it if he stays in prison… will you help me set the stage for his release?"
Robertas is silent for a long moment. He shakes his head, his voice tired, but kind somehow, infused with amusement. "Love makes fools of us all indeed. Sure, I'll help you." He shoots you a look. "You know you are playing with fire and setting yourself up for disappointment, don't you."
You shake your head, your voice firm. "He will not disappoint."
Robertas pulls into your drive, kills the engine. "That he may not. But if he surpasses the goal it could revert the intention."
He opens the car, throwing the words back over his shoulder: "Just make sure you have the papers and safe houses ready, as I said."

You sneer.
As if you would -ever- need them.

Preparations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The balm itches on your skin, the acid firing pain along your nerves, the healing wounds on your wrists instantly red and itching again. The scars will stay because the first and second layer tissue was deeply destroyed but the flesh wants to heal and you cannot let it, not yet, you have to keep the scars if you want to keep playing.

There are other scars on your body, testament of times gone by, but none so clear, so deliberate.

You bear his mark now, by proxy.
You wonder if he will bear yours as well, maybe.
Eventually.

The plugging of cembalo notes echo through your living room, the soft light entering through the curtains bathing everything in a foggy shade.
It will be fun now, to twist this to your advantage.

Hunger rears its head, your tastebuds screaming for blood and indulgence.
You exhale.

The piece you play is old but unknown outside your trusted circles and you play around with it a bit, reveling in the feeling it invokes: a sense of anticipation, of delicious suspension, just before -something- must fall.

Delightful.

******

The words come by themselves and Will doesn't question them, the flow of them mixing easily with the contempt on his tongue, the lemon-tart anticipation in his gut. "You're moving smoothly and slowly, Jack, carrying your concentration like a brimming cup."

Disappointment coats the side of Will's neck like a blanket, extending all around the room, bitter disillusionment threaded throughout. Will's smile is bitter, there and gone again, the lies and truth mingling easily, so easily now, answers and rebukes on instinct. "Nothing I said made that happen, Jack. It just happened."
He follows Jack through the conversation and yet his mind keeps returning to the contempt he feels, the contempt for the Ripper. He knows now Hannibal is beyond that which Jack will understand, that which, if he is honest with himself, he himself truly understands.

Why is it so revolting that he is the Ripper?
Beyond the sheer fact of killing, of course.
Will swallows, trying to formulate the answer for Jack. “Because if he waits too long, then the meat spoils.”

Is that it though? The adversity to cannibalism? They’re not even equal, not really, and Will’s education rears its ugly head, providing anthropological backgrounds, easy to tap into if he so will.
The meat mustn’t spoil so Hannibal’s heightened senses won’t be offended. Will flashes back to the sniff Hannibal took so long ago, the tone in which he commented on Will’s aftershave.
Will swallows, informing Jack of Hannibal’s imminent dinner party, his thoughts racing, his stomach in turmoil.
He isn’t disgusted by the cannibalism, nor revolted by the fact how they are obtained, the displays literal art after all.
Will watches Jack leave, closing his eyes on a long exhale, sinking to the little bench in the cage.

He’s feeling contempt because Hannibal hides.
In plain sight yes, but he hides. From the world, the police… from Will.
And that is something Will cannot abide.
Will snarls for a moment, unsettled and disgusted at himself.

Well fuck.

******

You choose the heart as a metaphor, the conversation easy and laden with meaning, slowly reeling her in. Her disappointment in Will is in every movement of her limbs, her eyes dulled by the emotional toll it takes on her.
It’s so easy to appeal to her better nature.
You wonder for a moment how easy it would be to appeal to her ‘worse’ one.

Maybe another time.
For now, this has to be a lesson.
For him.

And she will make such a perfect alibi.

******

Jack comes by late at night after Alana has left and you are in no mood to talk to him, wishing only to reach out to -him- in the solitude of your bedroom.
But there is no way you can now, is there.
And so you rebuke Jack for talking about the Ripper, feeling dangerously close to throwing him out. You keep your face carefully sad when you tell him that you cannot help Will anymore, keeping the second part to yourself.
Will doesn't need help anymore.
Not yours, not his.

He can help himself just fine.
And he probably already did.
You narrow your eyes and then invite Jack to the upcoming Dinner Party, watching his reflection in the glass of the bottle on the desk. Ah. So now the game truly begins.

You hide your smile in the sip you take, feeling suddenly invigorated.

******

The words they exchange are low, echoing even though they both know they might as well be shouting since Chilton is listening in anyways. Will watches the shadow move on the wall before his inner eye, his face almost passive, listening to what Gideon doesn't say.

It feels freeing to admit that he has had him brought here, freeing to talk about motives. Freeing to know that Gideon signed his own proverbial death certificate.

There is a smile on Will's mouth that does not want to disappear, the derisive resentment of Gideon's betrayal a sharp splinter in his mind. And yet his heart races when Gideon admits to have been there, describes the room in glorious detail. An impression of a hand on Will's neck burns for a second, the sensation of a thumb, so close to his lips. Of breath on his mouth.
Will blinks, forcing himself to return to the here and now, his mind thrumming on the question why he did want Hannibal to be killed almost stammering when he tells Gideon to tell Jack, jarred out of it with Gideon's soft statement: "I'll tell Jack Crawford everything if you tell me why Hannibal did it."
Isn't it obvious? The answer is there, on the tip of Will's tongue, a heavy, dark secret, salt caramel and bleach, drowned in copper and lust. Flashes of a smile, too soft for a passing acquaintance. Of red eyes, boring into him, a tongue touching his arm. Will blinks again, forcing himself to steady his voice. "He wanted to see what would happen."
He leans his head back against the brick wall, suddenly exhausted with truth, easily recognizing the breakthrough.

Boredom must come easily.
To whatever Hannibal may be.
Playing hide and seek is one thing to spice things up.
Playing with people another.

Will's jaw locks, a cruel smile gracing his lips.
A good thing that he can be really interesting.

Definitely to Hannibal.

******

The music is almost perfect, something little only missing, some minor adjustments that nonetheless elude you as of now, the notes on the sheet dancing before your eyes.

Getting Will out of prison will require a very delicate handling, the necessary actions needing to be timed so well as not to indict you. And Jack suspects you already.
You smirk, thinking of the dinner party you will throw for your, no Robertas' coven on the evening before the mortal one, a trial run and a deflection, as well as stimulating supplementation to the more liquid nourishment presented at the … inauguration.
Maybe you should be happy you didn't take over the coven.
What a gruesome bore all the official duties would have been…

Robertas needs to help you with Miriam Lass though. She needs to be prepared, needs to forget.
You, him, the house but most of all she needs to forget Abigail. And needs to hear dear Frederick instead. Things will come to a head soon, one way or another.
You inhale deeply, idly looking over the music sheet. The little dots look a bit like flowers on a tree.
You purse your lips, your mind embellishing the thought, enhancing it, providing the name in the rolodex easily. You would have to tear up a parking lot to set this up properly…
Well. You will definitely wear gloves this time.
Last time was such a mess.

You strike out a note and finish the piece, narrowing your eyes when you think of the evidence Robertas has to bring back from the cliff house with him when he gets Miriam.
You better write a list.

There is a spring in your step as you leave the room, the prospect of seeing him outside of prison again soon so very promising.

He's also quite alluring inside of it…. Maybe you should go and visit him.
He tried to kill you after all.
It will be delicious to see how he will react.

You lick your lips, catching an impression of your sparkling eyes in the mirror.
It would be funny if it didn't feel so good.

******

Tingles rush up Will's spine, long before the orderlies come and bring him to the therapy cages.
Excitement rushes up his guts, the dark web of before forming without a thought, and it spreads without waiting for his consciousness to catch up fully, edges wild and sharp the pointed antlers razor-sharp, destroying the cage easily. He could just reach and push them away and…
It's impossible to ignore the presence, there, to the right in front of him. Will clenches his fists on the bars, his eyes opening very slowly, keeping his voice low. "Hello Dr. Lecter."

He raises his eyes to Hannibal, watching the amusement sparkle in the sad-set eyes, kept carefully out of any cameras view. "I feel like I've been watching our friendship on a split screen. The friendship I perceived on one side and the truth on the other."
Awww. Very clever. Something shifts in Will, away from the pure anger, away from insecurity. Dark humor spreads, mixing with the phantom antlers, symbol of Will's raised hackles. He says it with almost a smile on his lips. "It's a terrible feeling, isn't it?"
An instant shift of tactics, the announcement very dry. "You've been lying to me, Will."

No shit, Sherlock. And he knows all about it. Some of the resentment resurfaces instantly, the words sharp. "I don't have a gauge for reality that works well enough to know if I've been lying or not."
A miniature pause in which Will can see Hannibal's eyes narrow, another shift of tactic immediately. Not interested in an actual verbal fight then. Interesting. Will returns to listening to Hannibal's words, closely. "You understand the reality of Beverly Katz's death. You understand your role in that."

Do tell. Will cannot keep the vicious little smile from the corners of his mouth this time. "What was my role?"
Hannibal shifts closer, his eyes imploring now, asking, no demanding understanding. "Beverly died at your behest. You're as angry with yourself as you are with whoever murdered her."

Ah no. The words seethe out of Will, eyes flashing. "Actually, I'm not. I'm singularly angry at whoever murdered her." And drained her, he doesn't add. Doesn't ask how she might have tasted, the words heavy on the tip of his tongue. If Hannibal still has parts of her somewhere, diluted by wine. Maybe. Refuses to dwell on the thought, his imagination raising questions he is not ready to ask.

Will blinks refocusing on Hannibal with an effort. "You tried to kill me, Will. It's hard not to take that personally. However, if I were Beverly's murderer, I'd applaud your effort."
Will almost laughs, a delighted laugh almost, a bit relieved and suspiciously true, triggered by sheer honesty behind the mask of Hannibal's words, warmth blossoming in the pic of his stomach despite his best intentions. He pushes it down, his voice definitely colored in playfulness, eyebrows dancing. "I'm no more guilty of what you've accused me of than you are of what I have accused you of."

He watches Hannibal retract, his mind latching onto the words without actually hearing them. “You think I am in control?” His heart skips a beat, flashing back to the night he ruptured the net, the instinctual recognition of Hannibal just prior his visit. Is that actually something Hannibal thinks? That he might have the power to refuse or rebuke his powers? To refuse… Hannibal?

It must show on his face because suddenly Hannibal retracts, his tone definitely colder. “I think you're more in control now than you've ever been. You found a way to hurt me, Will. I wonder how many more people are going to be hurt by what you do.” He pauses, eyes narrowed. “I'll give Alana Bloom your best.”

A threat. Suddenly Will is breathless, eyes flitting back and forth, the air between them charged, the physical sensation a slap to the face as Hannibal turns on his heel, leaving Will behind, shoulders stiff.
Will follows his departure from the corner of his eyes, short of breath and aware of an epiphany, just out of his reach.

He leans back and looks up at the cage’s ceiling, his mind overlaying the image with the antlered destruction of before and suddenly he knows, just knows he’s not going to be in the ward for much longer.
And then… what.

He closes his eyes and licks his lips, his heart hammering.

******

Oh he is going to be a handful.

You smile to yourself as you climb the steps, your teeth throbbing.
You’re just a tad mad at yourself, too.

There really was no need to threaten him with Alana.
Delightful as she is, she is a much better alibi prospect than useful as a murdered colleague.
So that was really unnecessary.

You pull a face, admitting to yourself that you may have been just a tiny bit unsettled by the easy way he unmoored you. Just a bit of sass and you were itching to bend those steel doors apart and eat those delicious words right out of his mouth. Your mind flickers to possibilities, recalling how his hands had clutched the bars just as you entered. He would have needed to hold onto them as you would spin him around and have him against them, too.

You sigh soundlessly, pulling your thoughts to the here and now again, raising your eyebrows in consternation when you remind yourself that -that- will be out of the question for quite

some time, still.

You really have to get him back out.
Time to get on it.

You pull out your phone as you leave the BSHCI, the text a long one.
Robertas will be so annoyed with you.

Well, it can't be helped.
You smile as you send the text, knowing the wheels will start to turn now.
The Bentley purrs to life, taking you back to Baltimore, and to your dinner preparations.

******

The second dinner preparations run much more smoothly.

The transport to the coven had been an utter mess the evening before, with Mendo too high on spiced blood to be of proper help, Robertas too vexed by your … request to do more than grunt at you and the coven members themselves way too entertained by the whole spectacle to move one finger. Even Sebastian had sat in a corner of a room, dark eyes gleaming over his blood-wine, chuckling as you were carrying it all in by yourself.
You narrow your eyes, silently vowing to never prepare kidney pie for him again.
You had left the food there, with the excellent blood-wine and gone to her, Bedelia in a rare mood that evening, playfully teasing you.
There had been no finesse after that, your thirst making it a mess and her pleasure hard-won.
You can still feel the growl lodged in your throat.

It just doesn't want to disappear.

You prepare tonights dinner party almost mechanically, your sous-chefs hired and professional. Everything is pork only, of course, the prosciutto roses delightful in smell and optic. There's just enough of the macabre to unsettle, if you know where to look, too.
If you are correct, Jack will try to get the proof tonight.
You bend down and settle on the countertop on your elbows, smiling gently.

You will pretend to be hurt to Jack, will be playfully gentile to Chilton and chivalrous demure to Alana.

The unholy trinity of deception.

It will be so easy.

******

You almost regret the invitation to get her to stay for alibi after the party, when you hear her literally murder the poor cembalo. Maybe the theremin at some point. She is definitely lacking the touch here. You settle next to her, smiling gently, entering the song, providing chit-chat.

The evening has been such a success already, there really is no reason to complicate this further.
And yet.

You hunger for sex and blood tonight after the deceptions of the last few days, easily reeling her in by talking about the loss of friendship.
Her lips taste of watermelon and wine, soon to be mixing with the narcotics you will give her.

You toy with the thought of just putting her into your bed but then the bodily signs cannot be faked so easily. And she is a delight after all, so soft, her skin creamy and smooth. You make it very good for her, her cries muffled on your skin, carefully taking your own pleasure without closing your eyes, keeping away from her throat.

Orgasms and the drug take only so long.
Time to get to work.

******

The fear in Abel Gideon's eyes is subdued, muted but oh so delicious.
You smirk, smelling the citric aroma spread, a bitter tang that permeates everything and lets the little hairs of all the base mammals in the vicinity stand up in alert.
That doesn't actually help though.

You lift the guard up by his chin, making sure to mute all sounds.
Abel is silent, watching with glittering eyes, mouth set in a sad line, resentment and despair only visible in the little lines around his eyes.
You are impressed by how he knows to stay silent.
Very good instincts, indeed.

You drag the guard over to the other bed, unconscious in your hand now, your fingers pressing expertly. You pull the fishhooks into the man's flesh, lift him up by the attached lines. The heart monitor beeps and you look over, watch the hectic lines of Abel Gideon's heart for a moment. "No worries, Abel, I won't kill you here." You pause, flashing your lightly extended fangs. "I wish for your company." You step over to him and take the contacts from his chest, attaching them to the guards chest just before the alarm would have sounded.
Thankfully the lines are long enough.
You smirk and then take out some fishing flies, hooking them up, attach tidbits of evidence to

them - the tooth proves to be a bit of a nuisance and you furrow your brow, tying the thin string around it.

Abel Gideon's voice shakes you from your concentration. "Will Graham's greatest hits?"
You turn to him, left eyebrow raised. "Very good. I hope it will get him out of prison."
Gideon huffs. "Eventually."
You turn to him fully, eyes narrowing. "Soon, I hope."
He tilts his head, expression turning slightly peevish, shrugging as much as he can. "Justitia always takes some time."
You click your tongue and return to the guard, the scalpel in your hand flashing through the air, bowels tumbling out of the man's body. The heart monitor races and you turn and push Abel Gideon's bed away, bending down to whisper: "Very soon."

******

The text comes just as you place Gideon comfortably in your basement, the man surprisingly well behaved on the trip from the hospital.
It won't help him in the long run of course, his bringing of Will to you back then unacceptable of course. You close the trap door in the pantry, very pleased when no light from below shines through the gaps. You look at your phone and check the images Robertas has sent you, the evidence neatly placed, the stage set.

Miriam sleeps peacefully in a chair still, the white gown too thin for her to be in the water yet.

They will find the Madrona bark soon.
And then …

You smile gently and skip up to the bedroom, your mind superimposing the image of the dark haired beauty there with a more sharp profile, a more muscled back and stubble.
The blue suits them both very well.

You settle in, very pleased with yourself and the night, with what the future will hold, very soon.
She wakes and you kiss her, pleased when she doesn't realize that you do -not- have any morning breath. You hear Jack's car long before the bell rings, gently intensifying the kiss so she will be beautifully riled up in justice and perceived truth and spite.

Brilliant.

If you may say so yourself.

Chapter End Notes

And now... it'll really get interesting :))) *rubs hands*
Hope you liked!

Thank you Luthi for the kick to my arse :)!

Payoff

Chapter Summary

Will is out of the prison!! (yay!!)
So have some smut :)
(5k - sorry not sorry!!^^)

The lights of the lamps is soft, tuned down, the scratch of the pencil on paper relaxing.
You draw a strand of hair over her missing ear, wondering how far the wound may have healed by now.
Miriam should have been found by now.
Abigail should hope that she administered the drugs as per your instruction these last months.
Time will tell though. And Abigail is too clever to interfere with your plans.

If Jack is clever he will go and get Will for this part of the play.

You really hope he does.
You left something for him after all.

******

It's time.
You project a deeply unsettled and hurt countenance to Alana, making sure she is feeling wronged in your stead, firy with righteous fury, so beautifully projected.
You will make it up to her later.
Come to think of that… you really need to feed.

Too bad she is no provider.
Which reminds you that your preferred one has deserted you.
For now.
She'll be back.
Curiosity killed the cat after all.
And she so wants to be like you.

The one-way-mirror shows Jack and Miriam easily in ultra-violet, making it very hard for you not to smile as she rejects you as suspect, follows her programming so beautifully.

You press your lips together as you leave, projecting an air of displeasure, making Alana fawn over you way too much.

She prefers to believe too much.
She will fall very hard one day.

You sigh in a slightly too relieved way when you lean back in your Bentley, tapping your phone once. And then you send a text to Mendo, asking him to feed well and come to your bed later.

Alana will be busy getting Will's dogs to Will after all.
And will most likely take some time for herself afterwards.
Enough time to put it to good use.
You lick your lips, the engine purring to life.

******

"The Chesapeake Ripper has set you free."
The words ring loud through Will's consciousness, replaying images of the last meeting with Hannibal, the hunch of recognition.
He follows the discussion with Chilton, more than amused by the naiveté still exuded by his… therapist. No, Chilton does not have the skills for this title. The air is chilly and Will steps past Chilton, marveling that he does not feel fear anymore.

Disgust at the games. Intrigue at the setup. Anticipation of… what. Will blinks, hesitating on the why, his eyes as serious as his tone is mocking when he answers Chilton: "Because he wants to be my friend."
No. Hannibal wants to be so much more than that. Will swallows, concentrating hard on not following the thought before he steps out, knowing what, now who, he will find out there waiting for him. Asking for help.
Excitement settles in Will's guts, spreading tendrils of energy, almost desperate to see the setup of what set him free. He leaves the BSHCI with Jack and breathes in, closing his eyes for a second, icy strength settling in his bones. "I need a coffee, Jack."

It is not a request.

******

Everything is here. Everything.
Beautifully prepared, set up, clean and distinguished, with just enough blood and dirt and evidence to be undoubtable, a perfect stage. Beverly's blood is set aside, the only blood kept apparently and Will narrows his eyes, recognizing the honoring in it. Not consummated, beautifully presented to Will and the gesture wanted to be understood by him. Specifically by him.

An apology. Acquiescence.
He doesn't mention it to Jack, keeping their conversation vague.

He steps over to the little cistern slowly, the darkness calling, like a fog.
It was timed so close… Will frowns, looking down into the water.
She cannot have been in there for long.
He drops the lid, calling it what it is. "It's theater."

He unfocuses, hearing Jack harrumph, the disgust and displeasure easily discernible, the other agents, unconsciously steering clear.

Hannibal anticipated Will being here.
There must be something, something small, easily missed.
Will's heart begins to thunder, his vision tunneling in, gaze sweeping the room.
Not organs.
Not flowers.
Not hair.
Not…

He stops, his eyes stopping on a shelf, filled with small vials and bottles.
He turns slightly, watching Jack talk to the other agents from the corner of his eyes. There is a commotion as one of the technicians lets a glass slab fall, the resounding crash sending everyone in the vicinity into a flurry of movement. Will sidesteps the mess quickly, pasting a concerned expression onto his face, his heart beating in his throat. He watches Jack yelling for a moment before turning away, nonchalantly, trying to keep from fidgeting, his eyes perusing the vials.
There.
His heart skips a beat, his palms clammy.
There. That is one of Will's own lures.
He would recognize it anywhere.
He tied it back then when… Will blinks, reaching for it as if in a dream. He was in the process of tying it when he asked Hannibal to check on his dogs for him.
He didn't even know it wasn't part of the evidence they collected from his house.
Will turns the lure and the little vial it is attached in his fingers before picking it up carefully, making sure not to clink the glass against the next bottle. There is something dark in the vial, something dark on the tip of the lure. Dark red.
Blood.

Breath is nowhere to be found it seems and Will has to remind himself to keep breathing, the world spinning. He knows it is a gift. He swallows.
A gift of trust. A gift of intent. A gift of evidence.
And… a gift of contact.

His fist closes around the lure, the little prick as its tip presses into his palm a welcome grounding sensation. He closes his eyes and turns around with a neutral expression that feels as fake as his hunger for solitude is true, his fingers clenching when he puts his hands into his pockets.

Jack is still busy with coordinating the evidence analysis.
Will blinks. He has to get out of here.

He feels a rush of relief when his phone sounds and he reads the text from Alana, alerting him that he should get home. He smiles, fully now, knowing he will see his pack soon.
He informs Jack and turns, not waiting for an answer, calling for a cab, the vial and lure burning embers in the depth of his pocket.

******

The gravel feels weird under his shoes, after months of polished floors and damp hallways. The pack does not feel weird though, yipping and barking and bouncing around him.
It's blissful. Will feels the lines on his face changing, the grin turning into a full-fledged smile, some of the stress of the last months falling away with every lick of his furry friends.
Some of it returns when she joins him, explaining about Applesauce. He wants to be happy, he wants to be but he feels wary of her instead, of her inability to see.

He swallows when she skips right to the chase. "You challenged my whole framework of assumptions about the way you are. The way I think you are."
Someone else thinking they know who and what and how he is. How depressingly quaint. He cannot keep the bitterness from his voice. "The way you think I am isn't always a reliable guide to who I am."
She exudes dead seriousness, voice flat. "I was wrong about you."

'You were never right about me.' He doesn't verbalize the thought, wanting to know what she means exactly. "Because you didn't believe me? Or in me? Because you let me question my own sanity, my sense of reality? "
Her voice has a vicious tang to it when she answers, a self-righteous vindictiveness that Will can feel in his bones. He wonders if he would feel the same in her shoes. "Because you tried to kill Hannibal."
'Yesss…. I tried.' And what did it result in? Will breathes in slowly, shoving this rather important question far away for now, trying to keep his voice even. "You think I tried to kill Hannibal. Just like I think Hannibal killed Beverly Katz. And so many others. "
Her eyes flash, her voice so steadfast. "You're wrong about him."

No, he can't really blame her. He knows how it is after all. But he -has- to try. "You're wrong about him, Alana. You see the best in him. I don't. " He swallows the other words that are on the tip of his tongue down, unable to actually vocalize them anyway. What -does- he see in Hannibal now? Now that he knows…. What? A lot. Or something.
He starts when she addresses him again: "What was done to you doesn't excuse what you did. Are you going to try to hurt Hannibal again? Is he safe?"
Is he safe… not for a lot of people. He cannot keep the acid from his tone. "From me? Or for you?"

Her face says it all and some of the joy fades, his pack picking up the vibes instantly, whining almost silently. He wonders how he could possibly persuade her. Maybe with a lie to convince her of his sincerity. “I’m going to stay as far away from Hannibal Lecter as I can. I suggest you do the same.” He pushes up, turning towards his home, his empty bed and the empty cupboards, dreading what he might find in the fridge. He gestures to his pack. “Come on.”
He leaves her standing there, silently fuming and troubled, some kind of doubt taking root after all. Good. Will continues towards his kitchen, not daring to examine why he wants her to be gone from Hannibal’s vicinity too closely.

******

The evening is silent and dark and the little vial glints in the low light of the fireplace, a ruby red glow of promise, enhancing the steely glint of the lure’s tip.
Mocking Will.
He takes a sip of Bourbon.

It is an invitation, he knows it is.
An invitation to reconnect, to … accept.
He downs the rest of the alcohol, relishing the burn in his throat. Summoning rage feels surprisingly difficult, now that he is back out, now that his pack is snoring around him. Instead there is a dark relishing pleasure of a game well played. Dark, yes. Vicious, yes. Fatal, yes. But well played. A grim smile plays on Will’s lips, the reflection in the windows a grimace.

He pours himself another two fingers of the amber liquid.
Maybe, just maybe he should accept the gift. See what the next turn around the corner will bring. He rubs his neck, kneading the muscles there with his left hand for a moment. He gets up on a whim and snatches the vial, carrying it and his tumbler of whiskey almost defiantly towards the kitchen. Each step on the stairs feels more freeing, the icy temperature of the upper, unheated floor a welcome counterpoint to his suddenly burning cheeks. He opens the door to the bathroom, hesitating a millisecond before he crosses the threshold, kicking the door closed behind him. He really doesn’t want Buster to take a stunt upstairs and come by right now.

He puts the glass and the vial down on the sink and then turns and pulls the curtain out, movements suddenly purposeful, sure. He smiles grimly to himself. Lets find out, shall we. The faucet rumbles to life, the boiler tank thankfully all heated up and full, the hot water steaming up the mirror in no time in the tiny bathroom, clouding Will’s biting vision of himself, scowling at his own reflection.

It is a pleasure to undress in warmth again, a pleasure to be sure not to be watched.
To touch, without anybody watching. Or listening in. Although… Will snorts, rolling his shoulders. He licks his lips and then reaches for the little vial, opening it with jerky and yet careful movements, hesitating only briefly before he brings it up to sniff at it.

Copper.
As he expected.

He blinks and clears his throat, deliberating for a long moment before he pulls a grimace and turns the vial, pouring the red liquid into the whiskey, the red dissolving in the amber, glowing faintly in the harsh light from the bathroom light, like a drop of gold, beckoning for Will. He swallows against the sudden lump in his throat, feeling short of breath, his hand shaky as he reaches for the glass, the little vial tumbling to the ground, rolling to the side. He lifts the glass and then steps into the bath, sighing when he lets himself sink into it, the warmth a luxurious embrace, warming something in him that had been frozen for months now. The smile on his face turns gentle for a moment, the tears in the corners of his eyes blinked away slowly.

He leans back a bit, head and arms on the edge, fingers gripping the tumbler deceptively light. He lets himself drift, the steam in the bathroom turning darker, billows of smoke and tendrils of ash, solidifying slowly, edges getting sharper, tips pointy now, cutting through his consciousness. The antlered net criss-crosses through his mind and vision now, anticipation enhancing the pull, red veins threading through slowly, lightly pulsing.
Dum-dum.
Dum-dum.
Inviting.

Will exhales a shaky breath, eyes unseeing and yet clear and lifts the glass to his mouth, tipping it fully up. The liquid fills his mouth and he gulps it down, not daring to hesitate or taste. The jolt comes within moments, his body feeling as if electrified, the pulses of the antlers picking up speed in time with his heart, breath coming in short gasps. His muscles clench, the net enclosing him, red-hot, welcoming pain as the antlers lift him up, his head falling back, the glass shattering on the floor, inconsequential as if in another reality. Sensations whisper through the fog that engulfs him, a pleased murmur, a proud emotion, ravenous neediness reaching. Will's fingers clench on the bathtub's edge as his body responds, easily, pleasure burning. He groans, starved suddenly, letting himself fall into it with a defiant jut of his jaw, calling to the connection now, demanding it to fulfill the promise. A shiver of amusement and then lust rolls through Will, making him undulate, pleasure curling deep in his guts. He gasps, eyes rolling up, lids fluttering, the water sloshing as he braces himself, the connection an onslaught now, unseen fingers, exploring him, his nipples aching, a tongue mapping out the shell of his ear, licks on his balls making him whine. Teeth run up his cock and he is panting now, a finger prompting him to suck on it, making him mewl just as another is playing just beyond his perineum. He moans around the invading digit and tenses as he is being massaged, so so close already and then there is a mouth, so freakishly hot and damning cold, engulfing his head and he is lost, suspended on sensation, aware he is coming and yet beside it, the orgasm seemingly eternal, carried on a devoted hum around his cock, the web around them both pulsing.

The water is cold when the antlers fade, but Will doesn't feel it, his mind blissfully empty, watching the steam disappear.

Somewhere, in the very depths of his mind, he yearns.
For more.

******

Mendo’s skin is not -his- skin.
But you couldn’t care less right now, feeling triumphant and suspiciously close to tears somehow, dragging your teeth down Mendo’s spine, none too gently, leaving wells of blood on either side, making him curse and moan.

You just made -him- come, on his request, his invitation, after he… accepted yours.
You groan, biting down into the meat of Mendo’s ass, sucking at the blood, ravenous with delight and possibilities, knowing you will still need to wait. But the possibilities!
You moan and pull your teeth out, your hands pushing his legs apart, the need to devour transforming into a vigorous rimming, allowing your mind to drift, to replace the sounds you hear.

You are so high already, this will not take long.
You push your tongue deep before pulling out, sitting back on your heels and pulling him back with you. You close your eyes and line up and then fuck into him, harshly, at just the right angle, smiling viciously as he convulses after only a few pushes, helpless against your skill, high pitched moans timed to the slaps of skin on skin.

You allow your orgasm to catch up to you, snarling with your head thrown back, roaring victoriously as your vision splinters in ecstasy.

There is no doubt anymore.
He will be yours.

******

He’s not sure why he has to go to her, has to see her, has to see what Hannibal did to her.
Maybe it is to remind himself what a gloriously brilliantly piece of shit Hannibal is.
Something that might be necessary, especially after last night.
Will swallows, trying not to fidget, keeping on the conversation at hand.

When she speaks of him, Will can hear the words, hears the echoes. Feels a maudlin longing.
The bastard must have magnificent time management.
And help.

Will frowns, trying to assure her, knowing it is true. “You're safe now.” He blinks, remembering words to this effect, jarred when she responds.
“I won't be safe until he's dead.”

He exhales slowly, resolving to make sure she is, even if he may be not.
Time to see Hannibal Lecter.

******

The front door is unlocked and Will smiles to himself, a bit grimly, wondering if whatever Hannibal is does not need to fear burglars.
Though… Will raises an eyebrow and admits to himself that said burglar would most likely become a snack - one way or another.
So maybe it's an invitation. He really likes to put those out after all… Will clicks his tongue and walks quietly through the foyer, wondering at the low light from the first floor. He walks up, quietly, empty hands clammy. He inhales deeply at the top of the stairs, watching the light fall through the open bedroom door, suddenly feeling rather unsure. He swallows, blinking rapidly and then clenches his jaw, pushing on. He lowers his eyes as he reaches the door, pushing it open slowly, his gaze falling onto the tousled bed sheets.

The smell of sex assaults his senses, mixing with the remnants of an all too familiar aftershave. Will starts to hyperventilate, suddenly terrified to find Alana here, to have walked in on -them-, after yesterday, after what he thought, after the invitation, after accepting it and thereby offering, after…

The sheets move and a dark head comes up, making a groaning sound, definitely male, wiping all thought from Will's mind. His mouth opens and closes a few times, no sound coming out, making the man in the bed giggle a bit before he is up with a flash, skidding over to Will, stark naked.

He peruses Will's form, unashamedly, a smirk on his lips, eyes sparkling, his tone teasing. "Ah, I see you have finally come to stake your claim…" He giggles again, drawing a teasing finger along Will's jaw, making Will jerk back, gasping. The man clicks his tongue, pouting a bit, locking eyes with Will. "Oh yes, your eyes -are- lovely."
Will finally finds words, grinding them out. "Oh are they. Who the fuck are you?"
The man raises his eyebrows, eyes sparkling, doing an aborted curtsey. "Mendo. At your service." He hesitates, running his eyes down Will's form once more. "Your… replacement I think." He shrugs. "Well, at least, until he's turned you I guess." He leans close, biting his lips, whispering. "You're in for a treat."

Will pulls a face and recoils, taking a step back, heat rolling through him, a lava flow of embarrassment, jealousy, fury and resentment melting into a ball of …
He clenches his fists, trying to subdue the feeling, trying to refuse the disappointment on its heels. He swallows, and again, his voice rough. "Where is Hannibal?"

Mendo shrugs, voice gentle. "Out. For groceries I think. He should be back soon."
He stops, tilting his head, his expression taking on a very faraway look. Remote somehow.
Will frowns and Mendo smiles again suddenly, his tone apologetic. "I am sorry, Will. I need to go. Why don't you wait in the dining room? There are some good drinks there …"

He shrugs at Will and then turns to collect his clothes and Will swallows once more, watching for a moment before he runs his hand over his face, shaking his head, turning towards the stairs, his stomach in uproar. The weight of the gun feels good and Will reaches for it without doubting his impulse.

******

You smell him as soon as you open the front door, his scent everywhere.
You could pick him out of a million people.
And not just because of this vicious aftershave.

His heartbeat is elevated, sounding loud and clear from the dining room. You hesitate listening for Mendo, not finding any sound from him. Good. It might not have been so fortunate for Will to run into Mendo.
You smile to yourself and then proceed towards the kitchen, putting the bags on the counter. You keep your back towards Will and wait, basking in his scent. There is something bitter to it, like a tang of acid. Anger. Interesting. Some caution might be advised then.
He comes to you, silent and you keep your voice low, not wanting to make it too easy. “The same unfortunate aftershave. Too long in the bottle.”

His voice is low, molten anger honing the humor in it to a fine point. “Our last kitchen conversation was interrupted by Jack Crawford. I'd like to pick up where we left off. If memory serves, you were asking me if it'd feel good to kill you.”

It would have done him good to fire at you, yes. You take a split second to imagine what might have happened, the instant, irresistible hunger making you turn on him, feeding on him. You would have turned him then. Instead, you cut off an ear a short time later. Still. He has tried to kill you since, accepted your gifts, let you bring him pleasure through your connection, now is contemplating to fire at you again. The contradictoriness of Will Graham.
You keep your tone even. “You've given that some thought.”

There is a vicious little smile in his voice and on his face now, the beautiful angles of his countenance haloed in black curls. You chose so well. “You wanted me to embrace my nature, doctor. Just following the urges I kept down for so long, cultivating them as the inspirations they are.”
Yesss, inspirations. You cannot wait to see his designs. And there will be designs of his, you are sure of it now. “You never answered my question. How would killing me make you feel?”
He hisses the answer, fury cocking the gun in his hand, pushing towards you. “Righteous.”
You avert your head, way too delighted in the game to be shot down and succumb to the hunger now, your soul hungering for more of this sparring. It has been so long since someone has dared. His appetite is already whet and so you poke at it, fanning the flames. “Aren't you curious, Will? Why you? Why Miriam Lass? What does the Chesapeake Ripper want with you?”

Hook, line and sinker.
You can tell by the jut of his jaw, by the way his heart skips a beat. He hurls the words your way, quietly sardonic. ”You tell me. How did Miriam Lass find you? You made sure no one could find you that way again. “
You suppress the smile that wants to play on your lips. ”If I'm not the Ripper, you murder an innocent man. You better than anyone know what it is to be wrongly accused. You were innocent, Will, and no one saw it.”
There is something beyond the hurt of the prison in his tone, relating what you shared. It troubles you a bit. “I’m not innocent. You saw to that.”
You sigh through your nose, resolving to bring him closer to his physical delights. But first, he must accept not to kill you tonight, and thus ending this delightful game. “If I am the Ripper and you kill me, who will answer your questions? Don't you want to know how it ends?”

He looks at you for a long moment and then lowers the gun, walking by you without any fear and without looking back, back straight, the whiff of him you get as he walks by carrying a trace of Mendo.
Ah.
Fuck.

******

The fucking prick.
Standing there, playing the submissive playbook, averting his gaze, baring his neck.
Teasing Will.

Will clenches his jaw, his fingers pressing way too hard into the steering wheel.
Fortunately the interstate is almost empty, leaving enough room for thoughts.
He feels unmoored, unsettled, furious.
Curious.
Vicious.
Safe.
Self-righteous.
Confident.
Desired.
Rejected.
Elated.

He hits his head back against the head rest, cursing quietly to himself.

******

Of all the places in the world Chilton comes to Will.
And pointing a gun. It makes Will laugh, the sheer absurdity of Frederick Chilton trying to intimidate him a sheer joke.
Will sighs as Jack pushes past him, following the tracks in the snow.
This has to end. Hannibal is ruining -another- life.
Not that Chilton didn't have it coming. A bit. Still…
Will closes and rubs his eyes, slowly shaking his head. He exhales and says it out loud, making it real: "I'm going to prove that Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper."
He opens his eyes again, unseeing, the following words not voiced: 'To kick Hannibal out of this oh so comfortable life and end the fucking charade.'

******

He is here.
You try to be nonchalant and fail miserably, your nerves frayed, waiting for the knock. You wonder if he makes you wait on purpose. When it finally comes you force yourself to not jump up, opening the door slowly.
He is there, cleaned up, his curls gone, wearing a different aftershave. Making a show of presenting his back first, turning around to you.
Showing off.
God, how you want to ravish him.

You greet him, glad to hear your voice is even. "Hello, Will."
He watches you, eyes dark and unfathomable, voice just not so teasing. "May I come in?"
The standard question of your kind. Does he really know? You decide to tease him back, keeping your voice flat. "Do you intend to point a gun at me?"
He smirks, weighing his head a bit. "Not tonight."

Ahhh, he will be the death of you. You let him pass, inhaling deeply, uncaring if he notices. You watch him take the room in, looking past what is easily seen. "Are you expecting someone?"
This time you are honest, letting the truth shine through. "Only you."
A whisper of surprise, coloring his tone as he takes his seat. "Kept my standing appointment open."
Of course. And everything else, too. "And you're right on time."

There is a sigh that breaks free of him, carrying the scent of acquiescence, though not surrender, something finer, more delicate, easy to squash. "I have to deal with you. And my feelings about you. I think it's best if I do that directly."
The last bit is said a bit sassily and the corner of your mouth wants to react to it but you curb the impulse. You have to steer this to a more even footing. "First you have to grieve for what is lost and what has changed."
His answer is instant, eyes hard, colored by simple, vicious truth. "I've changed. You changed me."
And you're not done. He is right though. "The friendship that we had is over."

There is something wistful in his tone, something very much attuned to her. “It had to be Miriam, didn't it? She was compelled to take his life so she could take her own back.”
You refuse the frown that wants to etch itself into your face, refuse to succumb to the foreshadowing his words try to conjure. “How will you take your life back?”
He leans back, his hands clenching on the armrests. “I’d like to resume my therapy. “

Brilliant. There is only one question really, and it is one that will open the Pandora’s box. “Where shall we begin?”
And suddenly he smiles at you, watching as you are helpless to echo the smile, the wicked game you play fully out and acknowledged.
You lean back, watching him watching you, the moment when he finally speaks covered in cotton candy surreality. “Why don’t we start with how you set me free?”
You quirk a smile. “Did you like the effort?”

He tilts his head, a lone curl refusing to stay where it should be, falling into his forehead. “Which one? The judge or the guard?”
I narrow my eyes, enjoying myself almost too much, keeping it vague on purpose. “Only one was effective.”
Will raises his eyebrows, eyes big. “Because they were both hastily planned…”

Your mouth drops open, but you recover quickly, eyes flashing, catching his little grin that is there and gone again. “As far as I am aware, none of the Ripper’s deeds are impulse-driven.”
Will clicks his tongue, tilting his head, his voice a low drawl. “Now on that we disagree.”
A pause. You watch him watch you, the air between you charged. Your tongue is dry. “Would you like a drink?”
Another tilt of his head. “Not tonight.”

He has never refused a drink before. You raise an eyebrow in silent inquiry, wondering.
He shrugs, voice oh so light. “I remembered a bad experience.”

You look away for a second, your mouth bypassing your brain apparently. “I promise this won’t happen to you if you indulge with me here.”
He stills, his voice almost inaudible after several seconds. “Is that a promise?”
You look back up, holding his gaze, surprised at yourself. “It is.”

He licks his lips, nodding to himself for a moment, offering you a smile, just this side of brittle. “Alright, Hannibal, then, by all means, I would love a drink.”
You smile at him and get up, aware that being so idiotically warmed by the mention of your first name really, really, REALLY means that you’ve got it bad.

Now if you could only care.

Desire (Su-Zakana Pt1)

Chapter Notes

I've decided to split the monster chapters into 5k chunks from now on.
I will probably rearrange the previous chapters to carry the episode name and part info as well (at some point^^).
For now - little plot bunnies!!! Hope you like :)

What should I do? How exactly do I end this charade?

The question is stuck in Will's brain, hammering behind his eyes.

There's a deep resolution in him to force Hannibal's hands, to make him drop the mask. He doesn't really dare to fully analyze why this matters so much to him.

Professional curiosity, probably.

Desire to proof he's right, maybe.

Need to force the truth, definitely.

And then, when he has that, what happens then? Will sighs, scrubbing his hands over his face. He reaches for the box of bait, putting it into the trunk also. He closes the lid with a dull thud, his eyes wandering over the white fields. *Jack should be here soon.* He turns and throws the stick that Buster brought back out over the field, watching his pack race after the little terrier.

The dogs are so happy now that he is back again. He bends down and pets Winston, who has come back first, yipping and poking Will with his snout. Will smiles and crouches down, pushing his own nose into Winston's fur for a moment, silently vowing to stay. There's a shiver down his back and a latent sadness in his gut and he pushes it away, firmly. Grimly.

Nothing will be able to keep him from his dogs now.

Not even Hannibal. Otherworldly or not.

******

Inviting them both had been impulsive.

But then you always had a rather inquisitive nature.

And their meeting on the ice had fueled your curiosity, the fact that Will would go to such lengths to hide that meeting from you. Discovering it had been an accident, a spur of the moment decision to visit him on your way over to pick Alana up. A detour really, but then the time hadn't really mattered to you after all.

You had seen them drive off, Jack's big car blocking the entryway to Will's house.

And you had wondered.

And then sent a text.

Will's answer had been short: "I'll bring fish."

And they had come, Will's glasses firmly in place, accepting the offered cognac easily. Will had given you a bucket of trout, still alive, his gaze dark. Your fingers had brushed as you took it from him and you had seen his pulse jump, had felt his refusal to budge. Jack had made some joke to break the tension and you had turned to him, genially, falling into proverbial step.

Easy, this. Practiced. And yet, totally new.

Will's eyes had been everywhere, drinking everything in.

Making sure you knew.

Making sure you knew he saw.

Delicious.

You had led them to the dining room, leaving them to talk and drink while you had gone into the kitchen to prepare the food, soon gaping for air on your cutting board.

While the blood of fish might not be your favorite, it had been a nice little appetizer.

You had licked your hands clean, the fact that Will and Jack both were on the other side of the wall a tickling at the base of your spine, adding to the game.

You smile now as you take the fish out, the smell tart and sweet, deciding to arrange it a bit more… symbolic. The squid you bought on a whim due to an old memory will do nicely as decoration.

You bring the meal in, noting the way Will's head tilts towards you, his eyes steadfastly on the decorations on the table. He has left the two top buttons of his dark blue shirt open, surely not an oversight. You can just catch a glimpse of the skin beneath, filing the fact he really uses all the attack points away for later notice.

You place the dish in the middle and start explaining, and he looks away, his face carefully neutral, though you can literally feel a certain kind of low key amusement emanating from him, immensely adding to your own delight.

You make sure to thank him for the fish, his answer dead pan, spoken softly and seemingly sincere, lips pressed in apparent disgust just so. "It was my turn to provide the meat."

Ah, he will be a handful.

Jack shoots him a look that is very reprimanding and you wonder if he means it. Wonder where the sincerity ends and the game starts. Wonder how far into the rabbit hole Will may have wandered.

You decide to play their little game, tilting you head. "I hope "providing the meat" doesn't

mean you still harbor doubts about what I serve at my table."

There is a whole world of interesting little plays on Will's face now as he more or less not watches you, aware that you are doing the same, trying to share your attention between them. Fidgeting. Averting his gaze. Licking his lips and swallowing as you open your jacket to sit down. Averting his gaze again.

His smell intensifies, just a bit.

You are sorely tempted to push the connection, to feel if what he feels correlates to the outwards signs but you cannot risk your attention divided right now, not with Jack here.

Such a shame.

You shrug inwardly, keeping your good-host-manners working, explaining about the properties of the experience they share and the fish, enjoying every moment.

Will's comment is sardonic - "Makes us tastier." - and you would have laughed it Jack hadn't jumped in, trying to deflect the inherent tension.

"None of our actions were personal."

Such a crude and obviously wrong statement. Will's tone reflects your thoughts perfectly, brutally, the words themselves deliberately soft, deceptively light. "I tried to have Hannibal killed. Isn't that personal?"

Oh yes, very.

And Jack has no idea how very personal his attempt had been.

How very perfect.

Well, almost.

The scars on your forearms itch, reminding you that you will have to reopen them a bit later on, lest they heal too fast, even with the necrotic poison that was used.

You interject, watching him swallow the wine down, too fast, clearly a bit compromised. "You thought I was a killer." He looks at you and then looks away, indicating a shrug with the little motion he does with his glass.

Not yes, not no, fully uncompromising.

You like this steel in him.

A lot.

You know he knows you are addressing him, knows your words are just for him. " Greatest crime now would be to walk away from what we've shared and suffered. In many ways, we need each other. We're the only ones who will know what this feels like."

He attacks his fish, chewing on big chunks, clearly agitated and you cannot hide your smile, his words grating: "This fish is delicious."

You say it with utmost sincerity, knowing he can feel this from you. "Isn't it."

Silence.

Jack is trying to break the ice by complimenting the food and you start elaborating on the many advantages of pairing fish and sea food, in this case squid, for aesthetic and flavor enhancing properties.

Will is staring at the squid, chewing stubbornly.

You sigh quietly, turning to Jack, choosing your words carefully. “I believe you have invited Will to consult when you rescued this trainee of yours, Miriam Lass, is that not correct?”

Jack nods, eyebrows raised, pushing a piece of trout onto his fork. “Correct. Though I believe this may have been a one-time offer. As you might imagine, the FBI is not too keen to employ him further right now. Exonerated or not.”

Ah. You frown, keeping your tone light while you reach for your wine glass. “Did he not provide substantial insights?”

Jack sighs, putting down his cutlery. “He did.” He hesitates, looking at Will who is eating very calmly now, listening - icily. “But they have concerns regarding his mental frame.”

You take a deep sip, rolling the taste on your tongue for a moment, before swallowing the tart taste down. “Surely it would be a win-win situation if he could consult with me then?”

Jack shrugs, picking his cutlery back up. “We’ll see. Maybe if we encounter a case that your help does not suffice, Dr. Lecter.”

You nod at him, running your tongue over your teeth for a moment, feeling Will’s gaze as he tracks the hidden movement. You paste a gentle smile on your face, your tone indulging. “I have a feeling we will encounter a case like this rather soon.”

Jack raises his eyebrows, reaching for his own wine. “Oh?”

You smile at him, a full smile that shows your fangs and sends and instinctual frisson down Jack’s spine, your tone saccharine. “You never know, Jack.”

Or if you do not encounter such a case soon, you will manufacture it.

You turn to Will and smile at him too and his eyes lock onto yours, wide, unblinking, unfazed, his face a mask of carefully hidden analysis and calculation. Burning awareness.

Time pauses.

And then he comes to life again, expression dissolving into blank politeness, his head tilting, his words bordering on playful. “I think I’m sated on the taste of trout. Will we enjoy desert at your table as well?”

You swallow, watching the greenery behind him pick up some of the colors in his eyes. You really regret giving the answer. “Not tonight, no.”

‘Only a special 18 year old rum from your private stashes’ you want to add, but your brain takes a detour as he pouts - POUTS - and clicks his tongue, poking the squid with his forefinger. “Shame.”

Jack shatters the little bubble of surreality that encompasses you both, his baritone too careless, too joyful. “Don’t worry Will, there are at least five diners where you can get a milkshake on the way home.”

You want to grab his neck and break his forehead on the fine bone china plates.

It must have shown on your face because Will grins suddenly, a harsh, brutal, open and honest grin, his eyes sparkling.

You reach for your wine again, wishing you could have taken red wine tonight.

You could need some of your special reserve right now.

Whatever game Will might play, you would be a fool to cut it short.

******

Finally an interesting client again, her big green eyes boring into you.

Margot Verger.

Victimized by her brother.

Utterly unafraid and unfazed by you.

You encourage her, knowing she needs to kill her brother.

Eventually.

As she leaves, unsettled and yet relieved, there is a knock on the door and a messenger brings you an invitation. You recognize it immediately, Robertas elaborate scrawl taking up way too much space. You smirk, slowly closing the card, your heart picking up speed as you peruse the item list.

An auction.

And lot #398 is something you might make use of, hopefully soon.

It has not been done with one of these for centuries.

But you have read about it.

It must be sheer ecstasy to turn him, using this, while the bond - your conjoining - is already in place.

You breathe out in a rush, feeling your body respond to the imagined scene, your teeth dropping in a flash of relief and hunger. They hurt and there is no-one there so you bite your own wrist to relieve the pressure a bit while stumbling back to the cupboard, pulling out one of the special reserve. You tear your teeth out, ripping the cloth, gulping the mix of blood and wine down hastily, too hungry for the visions.

A feeling of annoyance ripples through you at the ripped suit jacket and shirt and you slow your drinking, gentle the frenzy that wants to break free.

Alana will be here on your invitation tonight. It wouldn't do to kill her.

But it will do to experience some pleasure with her, indeed.

******

She is a delight.

Vanilla in a way, yes, but then she doesn't know herself yet and you will not teach her. It is too easy to manipulate her like this. With pillow talk. Carefully induced intimacy.

Directing her anger to gratefulness by telling her Will did what he did for her.

If only all things would be as simple.

You roll her over, your body already recovered from the previous delights, still thrumming in inflammatory anticipation of what you will hopefully buy at the coven auction.

You wish you could bite into her, her flavor intoxicatingly floral somehow, threaded with earthy nuances.

Her well-meant rejection of Will's supposed bad deeds and deliberate gentle haughtiness towards Will will push him only further towards you.

You kiss your way down and smile, remembering that Will likely analyzes the crime scene right now, after you so cheekily prompted Jack. You dive in, licking, trying to imagine what he might see. You don't dare to touch your connection, knowing the hunger would overwhelm you.

And you need her still.

For now.

She moans beneath your skilled fingers.

You wonder if Will might actually wear the coat you sent him.

******

After the dinner at Hannibal's he had expected the call and Jack doesn't even bother to hide the fact that Hannibal has made sure they would call him.

They only share a short knowing look as Will comes to the stable, feeling a bit remote, detached. Vaguely disappointed that Hannibal is not there. Will briefly wonders if Jack can see that this coat is not what Will himself would have bought. And that it is tailored. Bespoke even. The inner lining carefully selected. Gloves and scarves to match. That it had been waiting for him on his porch after that dinner at Hannibal's.

That Will had brooded over it, deliberating if he should wear it.

And that Will would risk his left hand betting that Hannibal had somehow brought it himself, though how he managed to get there so fast Will doesn't know.

Or maybe I don't want to know.

He presses his lips together, scanning the information in the folder, refusing the thought for now, closing his eyes.

The reenactment seems so easy this time.

There is a strange peacefulness to it, the fact that the murder is not part of it.

That the vision only shows the honoring of her.

"There's so much comfort in darkness."

The words shudder through him, like a bell, reverberating through his very being.

The blood on his hands as he sews the horse shut smells sweet, a dark earthy flavor threaded with something close to chocolate, and a tinge of carrot.

Reawakening to the real world is peaceful and calm for once, his breath even.

His mind is clear. He speaks the words for Jack, explaining, but his mind is far away.

I am comfortable.

He inhales a shuddering breath and follows Jack, grateful suddenly that Hannibal is not there. For once. He wonders how he will feel when Hannibal is close again. When he will see Will wearing his gift.

******

The candles are lit, the entryways and floors carefully guarded.

There are lots of elders here tonight, lots of the born ones.

So. Good behavior is mandatory.

You paste a smile onto your face and lock your thoughts, these kind of events not normally something you would attend. Even though you like social gatherings.

But auctions have often proven to be high on emotional trauma in the past, with blood feuds literally surging in the bidding process.

One can literally loose their heads at these events.

Robertas sees you as you enter the main hall and saunters over, his tone low, carrying his amusement. “I see the lot has roused your interest.”

You raise your eyebrows. “As you knew it would.”

He chuckles. “Indeed. And what an opportunity too. They say that using it will result in much stronger turned ones, as well as far less of a risk of failure.”

You hum, weighing your head. “The continuous feeding circle is helped substantially if established and kept alive through the physical pleasuring, yes.” You cannot help but clear your throat. “Or so I have heard.”

Robertas laughs at you and you want to punch him but settle for snatching a glass of blood from a waiter, taking a deep swallow. “Or so you have heard? I have heard that you beleaguered certain elders for years to sell their chairs.” He playfully bumps into you with his shoulder, his eyes turning serious. “If you do it this way, the risk of a deformation of the changing bone and flesh structure is minimized too since you literally feel every second of it in and around you and can intervene.” He grins once more, his tone lewd. “Or should I say under you.”

You take another sip, trying to ignore his teasing. “We all know how a conjoined turning works.”

Robertas raises his eyebrows, nodding to himself, very grave suddenly. “Yes, and the risk of it too. If the blood circle is broken before it is complete both participants die.” He blinks, turning to face you directly. “Which is why I welcome your interest in this.” He looks to the side, lowering his tone. “As you know it is unusual that the conjoining has already started with your… William and I would be loathe as to loose my nephew.” He winks at you, sighing overly dramatically. “I have become somewhat fond of you over the centuries.”

You chuckle, exhaling in a rush. “Well, then it is only good we will both be tied down during the turning, isn’t it. No risk of breaking the circle.” Your eyes flit to the side, watch one of the elders grab a fledgling and pressing her to the wall, bending down to feed. “Will you be our guardian, when the time comes?”

Robertas licks his lips, his fangs glinting in the low light. “It will be my pleasure. After all we already share a lover.”

Your voice is hard, unbudging. “I will not share *him*.”

Robertas leans close, his breath tickling the shell of your ear. “Not right away, no.” He leans back, grinning fiendishly. “Eternity is a long time, Hannibal.”

You glower at him and he laughs at you, clapping your back. “Come now, nephew, let us find Nela and pay our respects.”

He drops his hand and turns to walk up the steps to the gallery, smirking at the moaning elder - *Tobias?* - his fangs still sunk deep into the more than willing fledgling.

You cannot help but grin too, knowing full well the ecstasy the bite of one so old can trigger.

Speaking of old.

You enter the huge meeting hall just off the opening gallery and pause in the door, waiting for her acknowledgement.

She stands at the window, the light of the moon silhouetting her long limbs, her impressive height and stance making her seem even taller than she actually is. Her black hair tumbles down her back, the skin a golden brown, lightened by the millennia. The delicate choker on her throat carries a single blue sapphire, faintly glowing, just like her eyes.

Her expression changes a bit when she sees you, from neutral bored to annoyed amusement, her voice easily carrying through the hall. “Hannibal. Still within this life I see.” She comes forward, her movements gliding, deceptively light. She raises her hand and traces along your jaw and you hold still, unmoving, aware you could severely bruise yourself on her flesh if you do not. She tilts her head. “And still not rejuvenated I see. Have you not found someone to use yet?”

You swallow, thinking back to Lucille, the blood you bottled from her. You choose your words carefully, not daring to lie. “I do not… wish to rejuvenate just yet.”

She raises her eyebrows, eyes flitting back to Robertas who has come up behind you, her tone hard. “Still clinging to this life then?”

You frown, wondering, licking your lips. “I have found one I would bond with. But … he has to come to me voluntarily.”

Her eyes lock back onto yours, narrowed. “Why? He is in his prime now as far as I know, and you know making them succumb carries a sweetness of its own.”

You swallow, unable to suppress the flash of lust that her words trigger, your voice gruff. “He has the capacity to understand me, understand the pleasure of the kill, even in his mortal shell, already. I want…” You hesitate, swallowing. “I need him to come to me voluntarily.”

She raises her hand, her finger pushing up your chin until your neck is arched, aching. She bends down and sniffs along your throat, deeply inhaling the fragrance of your blood. Her breath is cold on your skin, lips grazing your jugular. “You have been saving yourself.”

You swallow against the pressure. “Not really. I have shared blood with a lover.”

She hums, pressing her lips against the beats, mocking your words. “Not really. You have given but not shared with your …plaything.” She draws a bit up, very close to your left ear. “And you have not shared your body, either.” She inhales again, sighing quietly. “Though you have given pleasure with it.”

She steps back, dropping her hand and you lower your head slowly, unsettled. She regards you cooly, vaguely amused. “So many masks you wear, Hannibal.” She raises her finger at you. “That is not healthy.” She lowers her hand again and regards you for a long, uncomfortable moment. “You know of course that I know of your games with the police. And, contrary to some of the other elders, I approve, it is a good thing you are hunting at least, behind all these… masks. However, you are still one of the few borne vampires and this game you play is dangerous, especially if you wish to wait for his voluntary submission.” She pauses and you know where this is going, anticipate it with dread but wise enough not to interfere.

Her tone carries steel, hidden in velvet. “One of the base family. If and when you choose to bond with this William his and your life forces will become tied. Often these conjoinings last until the bonded couple’s deaths, one way or another.” Another pause and you know what comes now will be an order, a verdict. Your heartbeat accelerates. “Therefore I command that you maintain your blood line before you attempt this joining.”

You feel faint, furious and powerless. She turns from you, turning to the table and pours two glasses of blood. She offers one to you and toasts you with it the you take it with shaking fingers, quite unironically as far as you can see though it definitely feels like this to you. Her voice is light. “I will call on a few female vampires who are of age and willing.”

She looks at your expression and laughs, her double fangs glinting in the light. For a split second you wonder at what age these drop, but that is one of the secrets the elders keep and so you dismiss the thought again, immediately, not wanting to rile her up. She chuckles, taking a sip, her tone playful. “Ah, now don’t look at me like that Hannibal. I know you prefer to choose by yourself, but really, you could have circumvented this so easily during the last decades…”

You don’t trust your own voice, taking a big sip of blood instead, light exploding behind your eyes, the taste beyond everything you have tasted before. Robertas is a silent shadow behind

you, hovering. You frown, swallowing down the anger, trying to keep it from coloring your tone when you push the words out. “What about Robertas, couldn’t he just maintain our blood line?”

There seems to be a drop of temperature in the room, everything utterly silent suddenly and then the shoe drops and you immediately wished you could have taken the words back, the inherent rudeness a fatal offense after all.

Her hand twitches and your breath stalls and then Robertas steps past you and around, wearily placing himself between you and her. He slowly turns to you, limbs seeming heavy. “We have tried.” He exhales. “For a long time.” He licks his lips, his tone low. Her spine is rigid. “Your sister Misha, named after your lost chosen one, was the last vampire child born, Hannibal.” He hesitates, his eyes filling with tears. “My brother and sister-in-law, your parents, were apparently the only ones able to bear children.” He smiles a painful smile, the tears dropping. “We don’t know why. We suspect that… we can only breed successfully if not bonded to a turned one. But it is a guess.”

So that is why. The thought churns in your head, the lenience with which you have been treated by the elders, protected by the coven and supported by Robertas finally making sense. The reluctance to aggravate you. They probably were silently relieved when you decided to postpone Will’s turning.

Her voice rouses you from the depths of your musings, calmly informing, seemingly detached. “The chair on offer is the one I turned Tobias with. If done correctly it will make your chose one almost as strong as you.” She turns, her eyes glowing in the half light of the room. “If I can expect your cooperation in continuing your blood line I will provide some of my blood as additional nourishment for the hunger afterwards.”

You gasp and you struggle to collect yourself. They are not joking. A gift like this has not been offered ever since Drakul fucked up so spectacularly with it, almost going mad with the power of it.

And ultimately getting killed because of it.

They must be truly desperate.

You blink, unable to “not” ask, needing to know. “If I should refuse, what will happen then?”

She smiles and it is not a kind smile, eyes glittering. Robertas closes his eyes, wearily. “If you refuse I will go to your beloved William tonight, and turn him. I will not have problems doing this, my blood is too old to fail such a simple task. I will then lock him into a dungeon with the failed ones, to feast their hunger on his ever replenishing flesh and blood. He will wither without food, his soul and mind transformed into insanity by it, his blood becoming

cleaner and cleaner. Sheer purity in a mad vessel, clawing at the stones with his scraped-free bones. I will use him to rejuvenate myself when the time comes."

You swallow, trying to subdue the nausea, knowing hell when you hear it. Your mouth is dry but you feel ill when you think about drinking the offered blood, suddenly having an inkling where this incredibly delicious blood may have come from. *So that is where you draw the line?*

You exhale slowly, trying to slow your heart, forcing the levity, your tongue feeling heavy. "I do hope I am wealthy enough to buy the chair on offer." You swallow, feeling an inkling of dread, straightening your shoulders to shake off the premonition. "The… continuation of my blood line has to commence soon then." You hesitate, wondering how much you should tell them. "He is playing with me. He is close to where I want him to be."

There is a nod from her and she turns a bit sideways, looking out of the window again, her tone far away. "Very well. The chair will be sent to you as a gift. The volunteers to bear your line will bring it."

She turns away and you realize you are dismissed, your brain somewhat empty.

Robertas takes your elbow and leaves with you, a silent, grim presence, void of all the put on levity of before.

He takes you down the steps and towards the entrance, uncaring of the whispers around you, the coven having heard everything of course. He pauses at the entranceway, his gaze lowered, expression grim but unapologetic. "I am sorry you had to learn about this in the way it has come to be. But… " he pauses, his eyes glittering on yours, "Hannibal - be very sure he is worthy." He releases your elbow, giving you a little push. "Test him."

It is not a request.

You forego to mention that you have already tested him, back then with Tobias Budge.

Never mind. You will find another test for him to pass.

You nod reluctantly and turn on your heel, leaving your uncle and the coven behind.

******

His heart syncs up with yours as soon as he sits down, his blue shirt enhancing his eyes beautifully. It’s a good thing this appointment is in the afternoon, the snow outside easily reflecting the gray light to be filtered through your special curtains.

He is composed, aware.

Waiting for your call.

Unshielded by his glasses. The armor he wears is much tougher though.

You decide to open your session with what you know of the case, easily admitting the wonder at the process into your repetition of it. “You were able to reconstruct his fantasies. One dead creature giving birth to another. The bird, his victim's new beating heart. Her soul given wings.”

There is a shadow in his voice, eyes unseeing on the floor, seemingly relaxed in his seat. “Rebirths can only ever be symbolic.”

Not really. But he will learn this soon enough. For now it is enough to draw his attention to his own, psychological one. “You've been reborn.”

His eyes snap to yours, eyebrows raising. “Wasn't that the goal of my therapy?”

Your heart skips a beat. So close and yet so far, his heart and instinct already catching up, his mind still doubting. You decide not to worry the point, not yet. “How does it feel consulting again with Jack Crawford and the FBI? Last time it nearly destroyed you.”

He licks his lips on this statement, clearly trying to reign in his emotions, his words clipped. “Last time you nearly destroyed me.”

Your lips twitch and you hide it in a sigh, looking down to get a hold of your amusement. You wonder if he is recording your sessions. “After everything that's happened, Will, you still believe—”

He interjects, tone deceptively soft. Hard as steel. “You can stop right there. You may have to pretend, but I don’t.”

Clever boy. You give him your smile this time, watch as satisfactions spreads in him. “No you don’t. Not with me.” You never need to pretend with me about anything you wish to say but you don’t, your heart beating in your throat. Your teeth ache. Too bad it is too early for red wine. At least by the current social standards.

The words leave him on an exhale, obviously a relief to speak them. “I don't expect you to admit

anything. You can't." He blinks rapidly and you wonder if he wishes for you to admit things, to explain things to him. "But I prefer sins of omission to outright lies, Dr. Lecter." He pauses, his eyes locked to yours. "Don't lie to me."

So very brave. You wonder if he is braced for the truth. If the game is anything to go by he will have it, and soon. "Will you return the courtesy?" He holds your gaze, waiting. That is a 'yes'. You push a bit, wanting to get past his almost perfect armor. "Why have you resumed your therapy?"

There is a definite hint of sarcasm in his voice, a heat that almost masks the aggression of his wording. "Can't just talk to any psychiatrist about what's kicking round my head."

He is staring right at you, pupils dilated. It is the obvious question, given all that has transpired. "Do you fantasize about killing me?"

The answer comes immediately, unwaveringly. "Yes."

The word hits you with a definite slam of arousal and you let it run through you, trying to keep your tone even, your words clear. "Tell me. How would you do it?"

His pupils dilate further, clearly aroused by the answer as well, his heart hammering in his chest, the pulse visible below his collar. "With my hands."

Very intimate. You are taken aback, your mind racing, your words staying in the predictable lane, just in case. "Then we haven't moved past apologies and forgiveness."

He looks at you and smile a grim smile, full of pride and awareness and stubbornness. "We've moved past a lot of things." He works the words over before he says them, stating them matter of fact. "I discovered a truth about myself when I tried to have you killed."

You echo the words that you said to Margot, infusing just enough subtle sarcasm to raise his hackles. "That doing bad things to bad people makes you feel good?"

He shakes his head and nods, little aborted movements, his eyes blinking in a slow blink that mirrors his emotional exhaustion. "Yes."

You hold his gaze, your question equal parts appeasement and challenge. "I need to know if you're going to try to kill me again, Will."

He takes his time answering, deliberately licking his lips, slowly. His mouth is open between words, the tip of his tongue showing. "I don't want to kill you anymore, Dr. Lecter, not now that I finally find you interesting."

So. The little death then.

A smile twitches across your mouth and the edges of his lips twitch in response, the connection between you humming suddenly.

You click your tongue, feeling weirdly loose. “Do you think this is a wise course of action?”

He narrows his eyes, teeth glinting in a sudden smile. “I don’t think you can be killed.” He pauses and you cannot think for a long moment, your blood thundering in your ears. “Not by conventional means.”

Your heart seems to swell, the waistcoat suddenly restricting and you stand up, turning to fidget with the pens on your desk. “So it was you who decided on the necrotic poison.” You don’t need to add which and where it was applied.

He hums behind you, his heartbeat still fast, but even now. “May I see them?” He gets up and you feel tied to the spot, vulnerable suddenly. It’s idiotic of course and so you make yourself turn around, opening the cuffs on your wrists with rough movements.

Will watches you, hands hanging loosely at his sides, his eyes firmly on your face. You raise your wrists slowly, the scarred side up. Will raises his left hand, hovering just under your right, his voice sounding far away. “I thought they would have healed by now, poison or not.”

The air between your hands is unbearably hot and you both look down, gazes boring into the raised and stitched skin.

You inhale deeply, realizing only now that he has changed his aftershave. He smells of cloth and wool, of satin lining. So he did wear your gift. You swallow, trying to keep the teeth retracted, the need to end this game right now, right here, an almost irresistible temptation. You raise your eyes, slowly, watching the pulse in his throat hammer suddenly, his heart drawing you’re in.

He wets his lips again, his throat clicking as he swallows open-mouthed, his hand shaking a bit, close, so close now to your skin.

You lean forward. You want.

He inhales, his chin raising.

And then his phone rings and the moment breaks, shattering into furious oblivion right there, like acid on your lips, and you watch angrily as he almost stumbles over to his coat, his heart beating staccato to the sounds of his steps, telling you he has to go.

You don’t offer to accompany him.

Right now you are way too thirsty to be in his vicinity.

You will need to go out and quench that thirst on the scum of the streets when the sun settles.

At least you know that the Behavioral Unit of the FBI will be busy elsewhere.

Desire (Su-Zakana Pt2)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It warms Will's heart that Brian Zeller apologizes, but he is distracted, the glasses firmly in place once more. So many bodies. Will refuses to envision, refuses to see too much.

To how many bodies would Hannibal's body count amass?

And - do I really want to know?

He watches his colleagues hustle around, trying to categorize the victims into time frames, little yellow dots waving in the air all around.

Serial killer.

All killers have a pathology.

Is he sure he can live with Hannibal's?

That is, if he actually forces Hannibal out of this life and … what. Reveals what Hannibal actually is? Would he want to join him?

Will exhales in a rush, watching the air turn white in front of his face, hiding him from the expectant faces for just a second.

No matter.

Hannibal likes this game they play just the same.

That is why he reintroduced Will to the game after all.

Now Will only has to figure out where it ends.

******

You speak the words to her, assuaging her fears, reveling in her haunted gaze. "I'm much weirder than you will ever be, Margot. It's fine to be weird."

Her profile is illuminated beautifully by the light, the green of her eyes almost glowing. You know your own are sparkling red right now, the human psyche easily ignoring it in favor of experienced normalcy, a refusal to note the things it cannot understand. Up and until the point where you would put your fangs to her throat probably.

You smirk to yourself, your thoughts drifting a bit.

It really is fine to be weird. Even compared to other vampires.

You were born into one of the last families, deigned to rule at some point

But ruling has never interested you, the intricate webs of deceit and manipulation much more interesting. And with history as it had been you were not even willing to take a seat in the council.

They let her die in the snow.

No, you don't play by their rules. Not until you have to. You prefer games with humans and art and music and beauty to the ethereal and boring blood parties in the coven. Pastries prepared with the meat from the likes of the ones who nibble on them, indistinguishable from the meat they know, the presentation and glamor you sprinkle everywhere enough to befuddle the mind of the unobserving.

You know that the elder circle definitely finds this beyond weird.

But then their nourishment consists of liquids mostly, delighting in creating ever more elaborate mixes, suited for the finest palates.

Only Sebastian caught on a while back, his inclinations often echoing yours. Or, giving his age, yours are echoing his.

Considering the level of weird you represent by staying within the mortal sphere and its temptations - and food - it is a bit weird that Nela has insisted on the continuation of your line indeed. You would have thought they would be glad to be rid of you and your … incursions.

But then the idea … the *desire* of an heir, carrying a piece of oneself can be all-consuming. And it is definitely different to turning one.

You shift your attention back to Margot, wondering if that would be a possibility for her as well.

******

The interview with the killer has left the air between you electrified, a current of raw energy somewhere between you. Will had called that man a predator and yes, he had been indeed, his thoughts all over the place.

It had been no harm to let this man go for now, he would not attack any girl again anytime soon. Though the discussion with Alana after had been taxing, her instinct to go against Will after the attempted murder of yourself a wedge that is seemingly not so easily dissuaded.

Will is preoccupied, his clothes carrying the smell of stables, horses, dogs, rats and birds with them. He stands on the steps of the dark gray slabs of the ugly FBI buildings, wearing the coat you gifted to him.

It is a fact unspoken and one that makes your skin crawl in delight, the sheer beauty of him in it more than you anticipated. The setting sun illuminates his face and you hesitate on the landing, watching him stand there, hesitating, unwilling to leave.

He seems unwilling to leave as well, his eyes faraway, as is his tone. “If I were him, I would want to take revenge on the one who told the police.”

Probably. You tilt your head. “Would that not be counterproductive?”

Will scrunches his face, shaking his head. “He would know how to make it seem like self defense. And Peter is too gentle a soul to be able to defend himself.”

“Peter?”

Will exhales, watching his breath. It is already quite cold again and he shivers standing there. “Peter Bernadone, the caretaker. The one who tried to honor the girl.”

Ah yes. By giving her a coffin birth, horse-style. You have to admit, the thought process needed to do something like this is intriguing. You just know some of the vampires in the coven would love to reenact this if you told them.

You pull a face at the thought, and Will interpretes it as disgust, his tone sharp. “It was misguided yes, but …” He hesitates and you know what he wants to say, what he doesn't let himself say. *Beautiful*.

You put up your hands to assuage him, your tone apologetic. “Forgive me. My thoughts directed my expression. It was indeed a well-meant gesture and it should be honored as such.”

He looks at you, his blue eyes iridescent in the natural light, almost white. You wished you had a filter for his eyes to see them now as they should be observed.

You should go home, feast on someone maybe, and then enjoy the evening with Alana, to bind her more closely to you. Instead you find yourself addressing him, your tone reluctant. “If you find it helpful, it would be my pleasure to drive you to the stables.” You exhale, watching the white clouds for a moment. “I know you did not sleep last night, not with all those stories.”

You do not need to clarify what stories you mean, his face shutters down and you know he withdraws for a second to reign the memories in, keep the visions from coming. He shakes his head once and grimaces and then simply starts for your Bentley, hands deep in his pockets.

The coat makes his already well-toned body slim and delicate, his curling dark hair glowing with the setting sun. Too bad you cannot see his neck, really.

You open the Bentley by remote, watching as he lets himself fall into the seat, weary and yet high strung, his posture deliberately relaxed. You don’t mention it. You don’t dare to really acknowledge that he has removed the scarf, his jugular clearly visible, tempting you with every beat.

You do wonder if your desire transmitted somehow, without your conscious doing.

You enter the address he gives you into the built in navigational system and start down the highway, the silence between you companionable but charged. Mourning opera plays and it fills the air between you with longing, the last rays of the sun seemingly swallowed up by the depth of his eyes. You look over at him, unable not to poke a bit. “You look like a man who suffered an irrevocable loss.”

He shakes his head almost imperceptibly. “I’m trying to prevent one.”

An interesting phrasing. You decide to pursue the double layer. “Do you think if you save Peter Bernadone you can save yourself?”

His answer comes right away, the address a teasing undertone. “Save myself from what, Dr. Lecter.”

You decide to poke a bit more. “From who you perceive me to be.” And what he perceives you to be.

There is a definite aborted small laugh at the beginning of his answer, not fully formed but there. “I’m afraid I need to be saved from whom you perceive me to be.”

Interesting.

So he is not only aware of your interest in him but also of your attempts to make him more … approving of your lifestyle. And obviously torn about this. ‘I’m afraid I need to be…’ He’s not truly certain of this need to be saved from you. From what you want him to become.

Ahhhh temptation. The siren call of change. You try to assuage his fear by gently hinting at the need to ascertain himself. “ Many troublesome behaviors strike when we are uncertain of ourselves.” You do not want to turn this into a therapy session right here, right now, nor a discussion of Will’s state of mind so you turn back the subject to the case at hand. “Peter Bernardone lies in the same darkness that holds you.”

He is smiling now, a dark smile that makes the lines of his face even more alluring. “No, I’m alone in that darkness.”

Oh no, never that. If you will have your say he will never be alone again. You hasten to underline this, your voice firm. “You’re not alone - I’m standing right beside you.”

He looks over at you at this, not surprised but with a gaze that has a stark glowering intensity to it, his face utterly unmoved. You hesitate and then unfold a bit, pushing along your forming connection, the moment the connection is actually made a sigh of relief and a reminder that you have not done this for way too long and you hear him gasp quietly, his hands clenching on the armrests for a moment, eyes fallen shut, face averted. You push ‘warmth’ along the collection and then withdraw, collapsing back into yourself, his heartbeat thundering, the smell of him clouding your senses.

It is a good thing that you reach your destination right then, the temptation to reach over to touch him almost an imperative, your fingers itching.

He opens the door immediately after you stop, almost stumbling out. You expect him to run to the building but instead he just stands there, looking at the sky, only a few stars visible tonight. You come up behind him, pausing a hair’s breadth away from his back, your voice low. “Our stars are the same.” He turns sideways and you are struck by him in the moonlight, the dark angel he is becoming. “I would see you everyday Will, and every night.”

He looks up at you, his eyes unfathomable deep and utterly indecipherable and then he turns towards the building, leaving you with your heart in your throat, silently cursing to yourself.

******

Will takes Peter out of the stables, his hands carefully on Peter's elbows. He really doesn't want any blood on the coat. He swallows, refusing to analyze why right now. He takes Peter back to the caretaker building, the empty cages tugging at Will's heart. Peter is distraught and yet clear and Will remembers this feeling well, remembers the rush when he thought Matthew would kill Hannibal.

The rush of the connection after. The rush of the connection now. He latches onto something, his response utterly heartfelt and brutally honest. "I envy your hate. Makes it much easier when you know how to feel." And that is the utter truth. Will can feel it in his bones, a deep fragmentation of his feelings, warring with each other.

He longs for what Hannibal has to offer.

There is no denying that anymore, not if he accepts literally getting off of it and wearing his gifts.

And yet.

There's literally everything he shouldn't want, too.

Will suddenly realizes that Hannibal has stayed at the stables and it makes him nervous, a sudden foreboding shifting his focus. His voice is soft when he answers Peter's clarification request: "Makes what easier?", almost breaking on the word. "Killing."

And suddenly the floor gives out, Peter's words carrying a dark foreboding and soul-shaking intensity. "I didn't kill him. I just wanted him to understand what it's like to suffocate and experience the death that he created."

Righteousness.

Will springs into action, hurrying back to the stables, his mind blank and yet hammering with the thought. *I want that too. I want Hannibal to experience righteousness. My righteousness. My… reckoning. If anything is to come of this I need to be his equal.*

Will draws his weapon in front of the stables, trying to calm his breathing. He can hear Hannibal speak in there. If Hannibal wants him, he has to understand what he's done and that actions like that are not possible anymore. He opens the door and walks in, silent as the night.

There is a dark smile on his lips when he hears Hannibal, his words evoking a feeling a wild mixture of pride, stubbornness and freedom: “Mr. Ingram. Might want to crawl back in there, if you know what's good for you.”

Indeed.

******

Time stops.

As simple as that, no breath, no blink, no twitch. Your nostrils are filled with the deep aroma of the horse’s blood, the smell of the intestines and the sharp stench of the panic that has settled in Mr. Ingram’s eyes right now.

Will has cocked the gun, totally ignoring you.

It is breathtaking.

His hand is not shaking, even though you know it is a strain on his arm.

There is a dark fire in his eyes, some kind of resolution in there whose creation of you were not privy to. You now hate that you preferred the smell of blood and petting of sheep to following him and comforting Peter Bernadone.

An unfortunately irreversible decision.

He did not come in this incensed, his ire inflamed by Mr. Ingram’s truly obnoxious behavior. You know him enough to know that his feelings are deeply colored with empathy for Peter Bernadone now, the strength to carry them out lent by his own feelings. Your mind goes back to his rejection of ‘being confused’ just moments ago, how his discardure of this allegation made him furious in Peter’s stead. Recent history for him, indeed.

You did not believe your ears when he asked Ingram to pick up the hammer, prompting you to address him. He had ignored you, pushing forward, cocking the gun.

Looking for an opportunity to handle this in the debriefing through sins of omission, not outright lies. His preferred way. You blink and let time resume within your consciousness, returning to that conversation, directing his thoughts. “It won’t feel the same, Will. It won’t feel like killing me.”

He shakes his head, the lines of his face drawn. “It doesn’t have to.”

You step forward, utterly unwilling to loose him to prison once more, your voice insistent. “You did the best anyone could do for Peter, but don't do this for him. Not for Mr. Ingram's victims or their many friends and relatives who would love to see him dead. If you're going to do this, Will... You have to do it for yourself.”

His breath is fast now, pushed through his flared nostrils and you can see his mind racing, his instincts warring. What prompted this? It is not only Mr. Ingram’s obnoxiousness or Will’s need to help Peter. There is something else there, something deeply buried.

His throat is so near.

If you would drop your teeth and bit him now you would know why.

You would also know what kind of sound he would make, a thought that has been somewhat of a preoccupation lately.

You would probably kill him also, your restrain not exactly the best, unfed as you are.

Unfed or not, you are still much faster than any human and you grab the gun as he triggers the shot, your thumb neutralizing the action. He is still now, almost frozen, unfazed by the broken down human in front of him, except for the repeated squeezing of his hand around the gun.

You take it from him, your fingers brushing his pulse, feeling the electricity crawl up your own arm. His pulse is calm and yet so strong and you can’t help it, your teeth dropping and you look down, running your teeth over them and forcefully closing your mouth before you dare to look up again, stricken by the way his hand lowers, slowly, so slowly.

The words pour out of you, unheeding of your audience, the little worm that is inconsequential and terrified. “With all my knowledge and intrusion, “ You transfer the gun to your left hand, your right hand reaching up to cup his neck, the base of your palm against his jugular. Your fangs make the words a bit more slurred than usually and his eyes raise up when he realizes that, fixed to your mouth. “I could never entirely predict you. I can feed the caterpillar, whisper through the chrysalis, but what hatches follows its own nature and is

beyond me." You almost laugh at the last words, a delighted laugh that makes him look into your eyes for a moment, finally, his gaze a dark web of contradictions.

You want to kiss him.

Desperately.

The desire is so intense it is a physical ache, making air between you burn, and surely, *surely* he must know, his mirror neurons in all likelihood firing wildly right now, enabling him to feel the same. If he chooses to. You are not stupid enough to think he cannot control it.

Squishy sounds behind you. Mr. Ingram tries to get up. Will's gaze changes, locked to yours, something sinister and yet playful entering it, his mouth dropping open in an almost smile and you cannot resist it, you cannot, your right foot kicking out at a precise moment, just so, making sure Mr. Ingram falls, unable to break his own fall, hitting the floor head first, his temple giving a sickening crunch.

His body jerks, and then there is silence and still you hold Will, with his gaze now flitting back and forth between your eyes and your mouth, his pulse picking up speed. You exhale and then let your mouth drop open, let him see, his gaze now riveted to your teeth, grazing your lower lip. He inhales sharply, his pulse thundering now, a tremor running through him.

And then he raises his chin, his eyes hooded now and *can it be?* he leans in, closing the gap.

Breath only now between you, all the air gone.

Your hand is in the curls at the back of his neck now, clasping gently. He gives an almost inaudible sigh and you cannot *not*, falling into him, your mouths clashing in a meeting of warmth and spit and softness and stubble and teeth and NEED, the moment when his tongue grazes your left fang making you both moan.

This is not a gentle first kiss.

This is a deep, devouring hunger, making you pull him ever closer, open your mouth ever wider, making him take you and receiving him ever deeper with every stroke of tongue, every beat of your hearts. Antlers rise around you, binding you. You can feel his body respond, inside and out, your connection thrumming, the gun clattering to the ground, your other hand pressing him close by the small of his back too. His arms come up suddenly, holding onto your shoulders and you groan, walking him backwards, right up to the wall next to the door, pressing in. There is no mistaking as to where you both want this to go now, he is widening his stance to receive you and you bite softly at his lips, careful not to actually break his skin, fangs or not.

"Why not?"

It takes a moment for his gasped words to reach you, busy as you are licking the soft flesh around his lips, your hands roaming now, freely. You frown, searching his eyes, his pupils fully blown. “Why not what?” He grins, his hands coming up to hold your lapels, his tone bordering on lewd, words breathless and you pride yourself on that a bit, totally ignoring that you’re equally breathless. “Why don’t you want to bite me?”

It sobers you up a bit.

So he picked up on something you did not consciously share once more. Your conjoining is far more advanced than you thought. And closing in on irreversible.

Your hands drop down to his hips and push, separating you a few inches. You lower your head, closing your eyes, willing the teeth to retract, the effort quite considerable indeed.

You exhale through your nose, licking your lips, the taste of him, of you both combined absolutely addictive. The words take effort but you push them out, your voice gravelly. “If I would, Will, I would not be able to stop. I would kill you. And I…” *‘I would rather kill myself at this point’* you wish to say but hard-won wisdom stays your tongue, knowledge a sharp weapon after all. “I need to be well fed and prepared if and when I do.”

His eyes flit back and forth, his complexion a lovely shade of pale rosé, married perfectly to the colors of his skin and hair. And eyes. They promise the sky and the lighting in here is much more lenient to your eyes than the sunlight was. They’re almost blue to you. You lick your lips. “And you are not ready yet either.”

Wrong comment. You can see it in his eyes, the way his mind races, his by lust and desire slightly befuddled mind turning the logical argument into a perceived rejection.

You sigh.

And then you step back, the moment when his face falls a blow you cannot counter, a physical pain that makes something inside you ache viciously. He composes himself very fast, his mind locking, the connection between you coming to a screeching halt, the very fact of it almost as painful. You reach up again, slowly, his jaw and mouth locked in a stubborn pout now, the muscles jumping. He allows your touch though, eyes averted once more, almost angrily smoothing down his clothes. You swallow, your words brooking no argument. “Your blood will be mine yet, Will. You will feel my teeth.”

He smiles, too softly, too sweetly. “When you deign me ready?”

You blink, slightly shrugging. “Yes.”

He grimaces, his eyes flashing fire. “How nice it must be to judge.”

He pulls away and you are left standing, weary and alert at the same time, watching him pull out his phone. He hesitates for a long moment and then calls an ambulance for the comatose Mr. Ingram, alerting Jack as well and signaling an end to tonights discussion quite sufficiently.

You wonder if he is aware that *‘when you deign him ready’* it will be his teeth in your flesh too. And your blood in his veins. And… you exhale in a rush, smiling a small and somewhat forlorn smile.

Soon, if Fortuna will allow.

After all, you have the chair for it now.

Chapter End Notes

(That chair, right? That whole turning scene is mapped out in my brain.... we will get there:P)

Blood (Shiizakana Pt1)

Chapter Notes

> I will continue to post "whole episodes" while we're within canon, but it feels more natural to break them into smaller pieces - where it fits.
> I hope that's ok with you all. All three chapters are just about 10k in total, so I hope you enjoy :)
>
> _____

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The snow is cold, a dry cold that feels like a punch to the face, melting with the grave anticipation to the devastating equivalent of molten lava in Will's gut, a flaming ache that seems to split him open.

His breath transformed the air into white clouds, the puffs of the great beast awaiting his very command almost fog-like. White sun glinting off the snow obscures the *thing* he caught.

Will walks closer, aware this thing watches him, aware that it, that *he* could free himself whenever he wanted to.

He wonders why he doesn't, knows the question is received without spoken words as his prisoner speaks, seemingly quite comfortably bound against the tree. "Which answer is it you want to hear, Will?"

Will frowns lightly, his voice resolut. "What's happening now and about to happen is an answer. I want an admission. Admit what you are."

The creature smiles at him, a hidden smile with the fangs invisible, only recognizable when you know where to look. "Must I denounce myself as a monster while you still refuse to recognize the one growing inside you?"

Will's heart skips but he refuses the yearning, an instinctual rejection that has him purse his lips, the whistle bringing the mighty beast on the other side of the tree to life, leaning

forward, pulling the rope tight. The beast that binds them together somehow, created by ravens and antlers and darkness.

Ravenstag.

He, Hannibal, moves his head, trying to alleviate the pressure, his face drawn but his eyes sparkling, voice teasing. “Why not appeal to my better nature?”

Will raises his eyebrows, wondering a bit. *Do Vampires have a better nature?* “I wasn’t aware you had one.”

The next words floor him, a shiver running down his spine. He watches Hannibal’s mouth move, recite the words, helpless against the resurgence of yearning and need, the need to fulfill the connection.

“No one can be fully aware of another human being unless we love them. By that love we see potential in our beloved. Through that love we allow our beloved to see their potential. Expressing our love, our beloved potential comes true.”

Expressing that love…

Will jerks in his bed to the awareness of the words not said, the words that only hum along the bond that binds him to the monster. *I love you, Will.*

In his dream, he frowns.

He watches the man bound to the tree, watches the quiet acceptance.

The power of the relationship, this bond that binds him.

Subdues him to my will.

He licks his lips. *What if he really loves me. Can he actually… love?* He blinks, remembering Peter, remembering the reckoning he promised himself. He whistles again, watches in simmering excitement as the ropes pull tighter, Hannibal’s throat red and chafed by the hemp ropes now. His voice is firm. “I promised you a reckoning.” *Not all reckonings are the same though. And… this is my dream.*

He stares into Hannibal’s eyes, opening his mind, willingly mirroring the asphyxiation now, his body responding, breath short. The man before him smirks knowingly and blurs, antlers rising, his skin darkening, limbs elongating. Will swallows, his words shattering the dream and blurring into the waking world, sweat now on his skin, heart beating fast. He tries to keep his words even, continuing his announcement. “Here it is.”

The bond pulls tight and there is delight and pleasure branding up to him, buffeting him, the snow he falls into as soft as his mattress, the ropes releasing a fountain of blood. Blood,

blood everywhere, the Wendigo jerking against the tree, the bond milking him of blood, tainting the purity of the snow, the fountain of red drowning Will in liquid, breath gone, lights exploding almost brutally intense until everything is gone, gone, gone.

Inconsequential.

His hand is sticky.

And somewhere in his mind a voice whispers ‘Delicious…’ with a very sated inflection.

Will opens his eyes unseeing, utterly spent and emotionally drained.

He rolls over and groans, the only word on his mind now a vicious curse.

******

You invite Jack to your table for the sole purpose to rub the fact that Will is now your official patient and that you cannot talk about him anymore under Jack’s nose.

You’re very aware that that is a bit petty. But your mood is beyond excellent after last night’s rather pleasurable surprise.

And it is so much *fun*.

And you’re still a young vampire after all.

At least by *some* standards.

******

You're glad the next session is in the evening, the proper lighting showing you his eyes in the proper color, even if somewhat less illuminated.

You wonder if the speckles of green and hazelnut will sparkle when he is turned.

You also notice he never wears your glasses around you anymore.

Interesting.

You are eager to pick the threads up, the interrupted making out session at the stables and it's impact amended a bit apparently by Will's dream after all. And so you intend to question after inviting him in, but he beats you to it, his eyes burning into yours. "Do you have any regrets?"

It's a broad question and so you adapt your answer, your tone even, letting him see. "With every choice comes the possibility of regret. However, if I choose not to do something it's often for a good reason."

You let that statement sink in for a while, watch as he mulls over the words. His eyes flash back and forth, unseeing and you know that he remembers the evening, remembers what happened there. "I'm riddled with regrets."

You smile, your voice soft. "A life without regrets would be no life at all."

He is annoyed, the feeling trickling along your bond. You wonder how it will be when you each know how the other feels. For now you know only that he needs to clarify, a certain dissonance in his tone. "I regret what I did at the stables."

Oh? You narrow your eyes a bit, wondering which event he regrets after all. Considering his dream last night it might not have been the kiss. You hope. You poke a bit with the question. "Then you were lucky I was there."

His eyes flash, his tone hardening. Making a point, looking haunted by his own resolution. "Being lucky isn't the same as making a mistake. Allowing you to stop me was a mistake."

Allowing you to stop…

If you are honest, you have wondered at your own restraint when you were home again, the sheer chance of his tongue getting cut on your fangs… And he sees it as allowing you to stop the kiss when you pulled back.

He will be a handful indeed.

You tilt your head, trying to keep your voice even. “So it’s not ‘pulling the trigger’ that you regret. It’s not pulling it effectively.” His eyes flash and you feel a definite heat in your limbs, know he is aware of that, too. You don’t really need any psychological education for the ‘trigger’ analogy either.

His tone is clipped. “That would be more accurate.”

You inhale, weighing your words for a moment, before giving him another weapon, this time of your choice. “You must adapt your behavior to avoid feeling the same way again, Will.” You press your lips together for a moment, your relaxed posture forced now. The waistcoat seems restricting.

Your teeth pulse.

His lips twitch in an aborted smile, his voice barely a whisper now, eyes unfocused, feeling the words. “Adapt. Evolve. Become.”

YES. “Yes.” Yes, that is what you want him to do. To be.

His eyes snap back to yours, watching unflinchingly. His nostrils flare, waiting and your pulse speeds up, your hands getting sweaty. You wonder if this is a good idea and then throw caution to the winds, wanting, NEEDING to know now. “I want you to close your eyes. Imagine a version of events you wouldn’t have regretted.”

You expect a rebuke, a tease but he simply follows your suggestion, his eyes falling shut. You watch as his hands clench on the armrests, eyes moving under the lids, his complexion slowly heating up, a blush creeping in. Furious desire trickles along your bond, along with the deep satisfaction of a kill, the physical reaction in this realm impossible to oversee.

You inhale deeply, mouth watering.

His smell is everywhere.

He slowly reopens his eyes, his pupils blown, bluntly focused on your mouth.

You wonder where he stopped the fantasy, ended the dream.

The weight of his gaze is an almost physical sensation.

You whisper the words. “What did you see.”

He is ruthless, his words chosen to rile you up, to trigger a reaction. “A missed opportunity to feel like I felt when I killed Garret Jacob Hobbs. To feel like I felt when I thought I’d killed you.”

You lower your head a bit, calculating. There are things he is not saying. Of course. You lick your lips, watching as his pupils dilate further. “And what does that feel like.”

He hesitates for a split second, trying to describe what you both know comes close to an orgasmic haze. “I felt a quiet sense of power.”

Yes. You smile, just a bit. “Good.” His gaze drops away and you know he is somewhat disappointed by your lack of reaction, by your falling back onto your psychiatric essentials. You continue, teasing him a bit. “Remember that feeling.”

He swallows and then his gaze returns to your lips and *need* trickles along your bond. He wants to see your teeth again.

Feel them.

You swallow, addressing the ‘rejected’ kiss and the failed kill both. “I took some of that power from you.”

He tilts his head in an almost nod. “You did.” He pauses, eyes still riveted to your lips. It makes you feel itchy. His words are almost inaudible now. “Are you well fed now?”

The words punch through your carefully crafted facade, instantly rearing the beast in you.

A challenge.

He really issues a challenge.

You smile, sharply, inhaling deeply. He is high strung, his body and mind aroused on several levels.

His blood thunders.

You wonder. And then you just throw out all caution, the need to taste him in some capacity almost overwhelming, the desire to challenge his resolve a desperate lure. Your voice is low, growling. “Grip the armrests and don’t move your hands.”

He blinks. And then he retightens his grip on the armrests, his chin raising, just a bit. You lock eyes, letting him see, your eyes close to burning.

You push your intention across your bond, watch as his blush deepens.

And then you move, gliding up and over to him in one fluid motion, sinking to your knees in between his legs, your hands pushing them apart just enough.

The muscles under your hands jump, his exhale a shuddering sigh.

He doesn't move his hands.

You let your mouth drop open, moaning low in your throat, delighted when his arousal intensifies with a rush, the heat right in front of you making him strain, his body tight.

Your hands push in, slowly, his breath fast, almost panting. You groan with him when you push them over his crotch, let them rest over the clothed hardness there. And then you grin up at him, see the involuntary twitch of his lips, his mouth a delicious shade of red.

Later.

For now you open his pants matter of factly, move his underwear enough to free him.

He grunts, his lips pressed together now, his expression a bit pinched.

He is close already, his imagination probably running wild.

So, not a lot of teasing tonight.

There will be other nights.

Of that, you are *very* sure.

You lean forward and swallow him down, your hands keeping his legs spread, reveling in the almost cry he tries to stifle, the feeling of the satin flesh, the taste of him, tart and sweet and everything. The blood pulsing in the veins almost on your tongue, hidden just by this thin layer of skin and flesh.

You can almost taste it.

So close and yet so far away.

A brilliant torture.

Precome on your tongue and you swallow it down, greedily, mapping the shape of him with the tip of your tongue, following the slight scars from the circumcision, the fact that he is as expected. Most americans are these days after all. Too bad you cannot do two-way docking then. But worshipping the crown is much easier this way. You grin around him, humming softly, delighted when he moans deeply, moving his hips just a bit. You suckle on the head, tease more precome from him, your own arousal heavy in your limbs.

You go down again, all the way down, ignoring your gag reflex.

He is delightfully big, and you revel in the way he restricts your breath, makes you light headed simply by the very fact that you are pleasuring *him*. You swallow around him and it makes him issue a tortured, almost painful moan that travels through you, making you moan

again around him. He hisses, his body locking and suddenly his hands are in your hair, clenching, holding, pressing you down.

Your own arousal throbs, viciously.

You swallow again, feeling his body lock up even more, and again and again, the muscles beneath your hands like steel, the edges of your vision drawing in by sheer lack of oxygen.

He presses you down even more, your nose touching his skin now.

There is a shiver that runs through him, but he doesn't fall, refuses to give in.

And suddenly awareness blooms, the desire transmitted through your bond, freely, tinged with shame and excitement, insecurity and furious demand. *I want your teeth.* You can almost hear it, the need transmitted so clearly.

The flash of your own arousal is almost brutal.

Your hands drop to your own body, squeezing, trying to control it, his legs coming together, clenching you to him. And then you let your teeth descend, the relief almost blinding, the fangs gliding along the silken skin, framing him perfectly and he undulates, his hands pulling on your hair, the pain adding deliciously to his essence, flooding your mouth.

Time stops.

You swallow, hearing his staccato moans.

His heart beats a thousand miles an hour, calling to you.

The only thing between you on the bond is ecstasy, your own body sharing it, almost untouched.

The need to bite is sheer agony, but having him like this, willingly, stays your hand, makes you commit this moment to memory, the agony a vicious, delightful detail.

Eventually he unclenches his hands, your scalp hurting delightfully.

You let him slip from your lips, careful to clean him up in the process, your tongue swirling.

You ignore his mewled protest, his whispered words.

You stay there for a long moment, kneeling between his knees, savoring the bliss, the aromas of you and him mingling in the air. His breath is still heavy, and you open eyes you don't

recall closing to his heavily lidded gaze, a stormy blue fixed on your likely still glowing red ones. He swallows and puts himself away slowly, keeping your gazes locked, his hands idle in his lap when he is done, the air between you charged. His eyes flit over your face now, taking in your pose, the way your lips are swollen, your skin around your mouth red from the stretch. How your hair is tousled from his hands.

He inhales deeply, his hand coming up to press two fingers to your mouth. His tone is wistful, slightly sly, awareness a brilliant trickle between you. He starts to speak and his words send a shiver down your spine. “And now I have taken some of that power back.”

Indeed.

You swallow, suddenly unsettled, though you don’t *want* him to know, but uncomfortably aware that he already knows, the little smile on his lips a sharp testimony to this fact. You click your tongue, slowly getting up and withdrawing, resettling in your seat with an exhale.

You regard him for a long moment, watching him watch you, look at your stained clothes. You swallow, your voice gruff, breaking on the words. “What a cunning boy you are.”

He smiles a wide smile now, his teeth glinting, the humor in it even reaching his eyes. He pushes himself up, sighing, coming over to you with two long steps, hovering over you for a moment before he bends down. He gazes at you, his eyes clear suddenly, voice low. “I don’t regret *this*.”

He reaches for you, pushing your jaw down with gentle pressure until you open your mouth a bit, the tip of his fingers pressing against your right fang for a long moment, renewed need running through you at this more than intimate, almost insolent gesture.

And then he sighs and turns, taking his coat on the way out, the door clicking softly into place, leaving you to clean the hell up before Ms. Verger will arrive.

You groan and let your head fall back for just a minute, softly chuckling to yourself, quite self-deprecatingly.

Well, you never thought this would be easy.

That would be so boring after all.

Chapter End Notes

You're welcome^^.
No, don't ask me where that came from but it felt natural :)

Blood (Shiizakana Pt 2)

Leaving without looking back takes more energy out of Will than he thought, the impulse to turn back and press his tongue where his fingers had been just moments before almost irresistible.

Almost.

Will swallows and pulls on his coat, leaving the house in a state that feels out of body, the waking world far away.

The beautiful green-eyed woman draws his attention a bit, but he is not really interested in bantering, in any more *connection*, not for tonight. He leaves her there with a small smile, feeling loose-limbed and wildly free.

He turns away and walks towards the city, needing the stretch of his limbs and definitely a good whiskey for later on.

******

That is a truly ridiculous hat.

The thought keeps running around in Will's head, diverting some of his attention, the freezing air keeping him otherwise contained somehow, focused. He wonders why Hannibal would wear something like this, something… so unflattering. *Maybe he feels the cold differently.* Lots of blood everywhere on ice and snow, guts and bone flung around.

He absently wonders if it makes Hannibal hungry.

The sun glints off the snow and reality shivers but doesn't fade, no pendulum needed today to see the details clearly. It's calming. Will frowns, trying to hold onto some kind of dissonance he feels he should feel while being at this crime scene, the discussion of it on auto-pilot. He tears his gaze away from Hannibal and his ridiculous hat, watching the red on the white once more.

A glint of ruby catches his eye and reality slows as he watches the droplet glide down its icy path, gravity pulling at it at the tip, viscosity making it lengthen and lengthen and Will watches transfixed, a shiver of hunger in his stomach, the moment it drops almost a physical sensation, reverberating through him.

He blinks, shooting a look at Hannibal who watches him, eyes glowing red in the sun.

Will exhales in a rush and turns, stalking over to his car while calling to Jack that he will visit Peter now, his tongue tasting the phantom aroma of coppery red, his fists clenched in his pockets.

******

He doesn't bother to knock, striding into your home with brazen confidence, his smile viciously salacious. You have to admit that the three vampires accompanying him are of a rare beauty indeed, iridescent and rosy.

Freshly rejuvenated, too, apparently.

You paste a smile onto your face, eyeing the large, wrapped package they are carrying and dropping unceremoniously in your hallway with a jab of pure satisfaction.

You swallow and then decide to make the best of this, force yourself to appreciate the deal.

It will be worth it.

You are sure of it.

Robertas clicks his tongue, drawing your attention, extending his arm. "Hannibal. May I present", he pauses, a green-eyed, dark-skinned sleek woman shyly stepping up to him, "Rebekka, of House Neria."

Rebekka inclines her head, her dark hair falling forward, framing her intelligent face. Robertas nods at the red-haired vampire behind Rebekka and she steps forwards, her wavy bob setting off her almost translucent skin and green eyes.

She grins at you, introducing herself with sparkling eyes and a playful bow. "Lya of House Archon." She looks you up and down and then smirks at you, her tone sharp and barely

teasing. “It is a good thing that I have seen pictures of your time in Florence, Hannibal, otherwise I might not have agreed to this in your current state.”

You pull a face at the jab, ignoring the light cough from Robertas, watching the almost-there smirk on the lips of the last vampire left to be introduced, her voice calm, addressing you with a slight incline of her head. “And I am Arinna, of House Lyx.” She shakes her blonde fringe out of her hazel eyes, her tone bordering on demanding. ”I am hopeful we will be successful.”

There is a lot unsaid in that short sentence.

No pressure then.

You clear your throat, pressing your lips together for just a moment before you collect yourself, straighten your back. You try to keep your voice light, well aware that at least two of these vampires are your seniors. “Welcome to my home. I will do my very best to fulfill your wishes.”

In and outside the bedroom you add silently to yourself, watching a bit unsettled as Arinna saunters over to the living room, obviously dismissing you for now, fondling all the horns and decorations. Lya rolls her eyes at her and and pulls off her coat, starting up the stairs, leaving bits and pieces of clothes behind.

You sigh, raising your eyebrows at Robertas who laughs at you before turning to Rebekka, still clinging to him. “Rebekka, dearest, let Hannibal give you a glass of his finest blood wine. Get to know him a bit. I promise you will not be disappointed.”

He gives her a gentle push and you force a smile holding out your hand. Her cold hand closes around yours and the sparkling energy that always spreads when the skin of your own kind touches you shivers through you. You exhale and your smile gentles, her posture relaxing a bit. “Would you like me to warm it for you?”

She nods, her voice beautifully clear, her smile surprisingly innocent somehow. “I’d love that, thank you, Hannibal.”

You blink at her, some of the pressure falling off, ignoring the alluringly calling voice from upstairs for now. You lean close to her, whispering, fully aware that the others can hear you perfectly, too. “Let’s get into the mood a bit, before we… do our duty, shall we?”

Rebekka nods and Arinna calls from the other room. “I’ll have a glass, too.” Music roars to life from her fingertips, your cembalo vibrating with her energy.

Robertas chuckles and raises his voice to call to you over the music, his voice firm. “Remember the test, Hannibal. It’s part of the deal!” He doesn’t wait for an answer and

leaves, the sound of the door clicking into place sealing your near-future destiny.

You try to keep your irritation off your face, wondering at the insistence, but Rebekka's fingers gliding down your body to your crotch shift your focus away, reminding you that still waters are often deep.

And very delightful.

You bend down and offer her a kiss, subconsciously vaguely disappointed to not feel stubble, but you push the feeling away, delighted when she drops her fangs immediately, slicing your tongue, the pleasure-pain rushing down your spine.

There are things to be said for sex with your own kind.

But.

God, it will be so good with him.

You push in deep, your own fangs dropping, lifting Rebekka up onto the counter, hoping Lya won't mind waiting.

******

The air is cold and the red streaked across the white everywhere is a stark contrast to the dark trees and laden sky. Will is vaguely disappointed that Hannibal isn't there, wondering at this, the thing *between* them locked down tightly. It's nothing he is concerned about.

Right.

Will frowns lightly, stepping forward to envision the crime, the pendulum swinging with an effort. Such a difference to the last crime scene. He exhales, trying to focus, his mind scattered by the fact that Hannibal isn't there. The Ravenstag roars into existence, once more by Will's thoughts and how easily it is to direct it, make it kill at Will's command.

It is beautiful to watch it maim.

He cannot help but continue the thought.

More beautiful to do the maiming myself.

His vision adapts instantly, his form expanding, antlers pushing through his shoulders and up behind his neck, his teeth sharp. He bites down deep, flesh and skin between his teeth, his face drenched in blood.

The roar builds, inescapably, and Will rears up, giving himself over to it, blood dripping from his mouth with a feeling of pure, sheer satisfaction, all muscles primed, his mind blissfuly free.

He can still taste the copper on his tongue when reality shifts back, a seamless blur, leaving only the desire for *this* behind. Will stares at the woman, unsettled by the easiness of the transition.

He presses his tongue to his teeth for a moment and then refocuses on Jack, waiting for his interpretation.

He is glad when it is done, wondering how long it might possibly take him to drive to Hannibal's house in this weather.

******

Will hovers in front of Hannibal's door, unsure if he should or should not ring the bell.

Or actually be here for that matter. Will sighs, pressing his fist against the door, vaguely surprised when the door opens with the pressure, the latch apparently not fully closed. The door swings open, revealing the fully lit hallway, living room and dining room equally lit up.

Will clears his throat, the tickling at the back of his mind telling him that Hannibal is here, but otherwise their connection is still on a firm lockdown.

Intentional lockdown. *Weird*.

He steps inside, closing the door behind himself, his gaze falling onto a cloak in a heap at the base of the stairs, the hair at the back of his neck standing up. *That is so… uncharacteristic*. Will frowns, looking up the stairs for a moment before something red in the dining room off to his far left catches his attention. He turns and walks towards it, slowly, feeling a sense of nausea when the red turn out to be little puddles of blood, some smeared, some obviously spills from… *bottles*?

Having a feast?

Giggling from upstairs, followed by a long, drawn out moan, obviously delighted. And female in pitch. *Not just Mendo, huh*. Will clenches his jaw, his heartbeat picking up, thundering in his own ears. *He must be quite distracted not to realize I'm here.* He clenches and unclenches his fist a few times, his emotions a whirlwind, trying to rationalize and calm them with what he knows of the world Hannibal inhabits, with the *rules* he knows he is not privy to. Not yet.

Will inhales a shaking breath, his vision patchy, blinking rapidly. He takes out his glasses and puts them on, the calming effect immediate, the distancing emotion easily accessed. He breathes until he feels calm again, pondering whether he should try to soften his steps. He pulls a face at himself at the thought, silently berating himself. *You're in a house with multiple vampires. If they haven't killed you yet they probably like you this way*. He sighs and starts up the stairs, following the sounds of obvious enjoyment, his mind picking the details on auto pilot. At least two women, *vampires?*, and … Hannibal. In bed, if the rustling is anything to go by. A shower running somewhere. The scent of copper everywhere.

A low moan, male, echoes towards him and it is so close to what he heard and experienced the other day in Hannibal's office that it punches the air out of Will, his legs shaking. He clenches his hand on the handrail and waits until his muscles work properly again, raising his eyes to look into the burning yellow ones of a woman, dripping wet and naked, staring at him from the top of the stairs. A cold stare, feline and feral and uncompromising. Will's instinct roars to life, telling him to run, to turn, to flee. Something.

He doesn't.

Reality slows.

The woman, the *vampire*, looks Will up and down with a glitter in her eyes and then sniffs the air, her eyebrows raising prettily. She forms an amused "oh" with her lips and then tilts her head, looking sideways, mouthing words Will cannot hear, fangs clearly visible.

Silence descends, suddenly and quite brutally.

She suddenly grins and steps forward, reaching to take Will by the hand, tugging him with her towards the bedroom and Will cannot help but stumble along, the hand that's holding him feeling like marble to him.

They turn a corner and enter past the Samurai armor, halting next to the armchairs. She slides behind Will and embraces him, her nose in his hair, a purr clearly audible as her tongue presses against his jugular for a moment. Her voice is a whisper, dangerous and playful, only audible to Will because she speaks right next to his ear, her fingers gliding over his body. "Look what I found." She giggles, humming a bit, pressing into Will.

He does not dare to move, or, he is unable to, he is unsure which it might be, his eyes riveting to the scene on the bed. Hannibal is on it, leaning back on cushions, a red haired vampire riding his hips, still, her motions slow and even while she is turned around to look at Will, smiling salaciously. A darker skinned vampire just glides off of Hannibal's face, falling to her side with a deep groan, her hand reaching to finish what was obviously started. There are bite marks on all of them, everywhere, in various states of healing, the blue bedspread tainted by dark red.

Will cannot help feel aroused, the excitement mixing viciously with the feeling of betrayal he cannot suppress, disappointment and intimidation and doubt and fury and need and exhaustion and … abject misery. He blinks and the vampire still hugging him suddenly pets his hair, softly shushing him. "Shhhh, now don't be hurt, little one. It's all just fun and play…"

Bitterness rises, bile in his throat, giving him back some strength, the words ringing way too true. He licks his lips, eyes locking onto Hannibal's. His voice is brittle. "Yeah, I guess so."

He turns his head and locks his gaze to the vampire holding him and to his surprise she releases him and steps back, her gaze unfathomable. He raises his hand and rubs over his face, squeezing the bridge of his nose under the glasses for a moment before he turns, almost stumbling down the stairs, his only thought to reach the door.

There is a displacement of air and Hannibal stops him with a word, just as Will wants to reach for the front door, his vision blurry.

"Please."

The handle is cold under Will's sweaty hand, his heart thundering once more, his breath coming fast but he wills himself to turn a bit, to look, to refuse to be further intimidated.

Hannibal stands there, hastily donned underwear on and hair decidedly undone, reeking of sex and blood, his expression a wild mix of sheepyness and desperation. It would be funny if Will would be so inclined right now, but he isn't, grimly waiting for Hannibal to continue.

Hannibal inhales deeply, blinking once, his hands raising in a calming gesture. Will wants to slap them down. "Will, please, trust me, this is nothing permanent."

Riiighhhht. Will's tone is acerbic. "Just fun and play?"

Hannibal clears his throat. "Mostly."

Will smiles a grim smile, his tone bitter. "Interesting timing, indeed." He doesn't feel like elaborating and knows he doesn't need to when Hannibal pulls a face, his tone apologetic. "I didn't plan for this to happen now, but it cannot be helped." He trails off, obviously working through some alternative explanations and Will reminds himself of those rules he might not know about. Though he isn't feeling too lenient about that fact right now.

On the contrary. Fuck those rules.

Hannibal clears his throat again, continuing slowly, his tone imploring. "Please, Will, I am …", he hesitates, taking a step forward, "I only have your best interests in mind."

What the fuck.

Will laughs at him, a startled, impulsive cackle that is driven by bitterness and betrayal. "My best interests. By literally showing me how good it would be if I would get actually laid?" He presses his lips together, hissing the words. "Or that blowjobs don't count for much, intimacy-wise."

Hannibal's eyes flare up, but he is silent, shaking his head once, obviously trying to form words. He opens his mouth after a moment, but Will interjects, knowing Hannibal hates it but uncaring right now, his tone vicious. "I bet you have no qualms about sharing *intimacy* with any of them. How many are there? Three? Four? Plus Alana? Oh, and that Mendo?" He pauses, his voice dropping very low, drenched in defeated sarcasm. "Quite invaluable intimacy."

-I- value my intimacy.

He wants to say it but he cannot, the words stuck in his throat, impossible to voice. Will blinks and turns abruptly, leaving Hannibal standing there, telling himself he is *not* disappointed when Hannibal does not follow him and stop him.

Liar.

Do you really want to go home and lick your wounds now?

He hisses in annoyance and turns around and stalks back in, ignoring Hannibal's startled inquiry, heading for the set of keys he can see on the back of the table in the back. He snatches them up and turns around, his tone allowing for no argument. "I'll be at your office. Come by as soon as you can, we need to discuss the case." He pushes past Hannibal, slightly surprised that Hannibal lets him go, the hurt slowly morphing into resolution.

The fact that he is alive, still, after ruining the mood for four fucking vampires, has to count for something, after all.

Blood (Shiizakana Pt 3)

You leave Rebekka, Lya and Arinna in a haste, your hair still wet from the shower when you rush through the air, your mind in turmoil. Lya and Rebekka had been a bit disgruntled by your hasty actions, but Arinna had watched you quietly, carefully, her golden stare looking right into your soul. Or so it had felt. She probably is quite empathic herself.

You should probably look into that fact.

At some point.

You had told them to make themselves at home, promised to be home as soon as possible and then jumped off, fully aware that your special reserves would be depleted by the end of the night.

Well, *priorities*.

Leave it to him to floor you and literally drag you by the leash in the same moment.

You zone in on his heartbeat, viciously berating yourself that you had locked down so tightly before that you hadn't even heard him when he came into your home.

That mustn't happen again.

He is there, now, as promised, no - *stated*.

You land on the roof and enter through the little window there, lightly jump down the ladder to the hidden door in your book shelves.

His scent is everywhere.

He must have perused the books.

Touched them.

Extensively.

You push the door open and step out, softly closing the door behind you.

He is downstairs, looking at drawings, the increase in his heartbeat telling you that he knows you are there but he refuses to look up, taking a sip of wine.

Just above the sketches.

If a drop would fall…

You have killed for less.

Much less.

You think he knows that.

You open your side of the bond, catching a flutter of vicious amusement before he swirls the wine in his glass around, quite deliberately.

Fiend.

You smile, indulgently. Robertas was right. You have it bad.

You sigh, dropping down next to him, a bit nervous suddenly. He turns around and locks eyes with you, raising his glass up to take another sip and suddenly you realize that this is *your* wine, not the one you would give *him*, no, it is *yours*, the one with…

Arousal slams through you, breath short and Will's eyes glitter, the long line of his neck visible easily because he has the top two buttons of his shirt undone. Not a coincident either. His tone is steely, laced with acid. "You better keep that for the ladies at home." He takes another sip, watching you watching him swallow, licking his lips after. "An interesting tang, this one."

Indeed.

He steps around you and over to his chair, carefully putting the wine glass down next to it. And then he returns and sits down on the edge of your desk with a small sigh, pushing his hands onto the edge as well. You only realize he has rolled up his sleeves as well. *Fiend, indeed.*

You swallow and then step up to the other side, putting away sheets of paper and pencils, fully aware that you're fidgeting and unable to to stop, nervousness settled deep within you.

He is asserting himself in your space, right here, right now.

That much is clear.

He hasn't made a demand though. Yet?

It might be wise to follow his lead for now.

And keep your hands to yourself.

No matter how hard this might be.

And so you do.

He finishes his whole glass of wine.

You wonder if his empathy would help him conjure some of the images forever locked into that 'tang'. You wonder if he fantasizes.

You talk about beasts and manifestations.

Adapt. Evolve. Become.

Randall would be a good test, wouldn't he.

Nothing Will cannot handle, of that you are sure.

That mindless beast Randall wants to become no match for the cunning boy that right now finishes off one of your best blood wines.

And shows no signs of nausea or regret.

And who, without so much as a backward glance, goes and takes another bottle and leaves, head high, making sure you catch a glance at his jugular.

You sink down in your chair, feeling quite exhausted suddenly, your mind in a whirl.

He likes to play. And he likes to tease, deliberately so. There is a note of desperate jealousy in the base vibrations of your bond, and you ponder it, wonder how you would feel. Have felt because of his starting entanglement with Alana back then. You know the taste of his lips now.

Though, if you are not mistaken, another taste might be a while of.

Not to mention *that* other taste is probably out of the question for a long while, too.

You sigh, pondering Will's proclivities for a moment.

He is turned on by your vampiric side, but then many mortals are.

He was accepting of your attraction to him from the start, but has not been seeking out sexual contact as far as you are aware. Well, apart from Alana, which he knew for a while, and you nipped that one in the butt.

He likes control, dares to assert it even at this level of the game, which makes for a promising outlook in and outside of the bedroom.

He has a mind like no other, able to conjure whatever he wants. He probably gets off to these conjured images, and easily. The brain is the biggest sexual organ after all, even for 'normal' mortals.

You purse your lips, looking unseeing at the empty wine glass.

He likes the taste of blood.

Or, he likes it enough to be able to stomach it.

What a promising thing, indeed.

You rouse yourself from this truly invigorating thought and return your thoughts to the three vampires waiting for you. Their proclivities in bed you know already.

And in the shower.

And on the counter.

Arinna likes to kiss Lya while you take her.

And Rebekka likes to watch in post-coital haze.

You wonder how long it will take, and what those children will look like. Vampiric pregnancies last 12 months - maybe you will have turned Will by then. And he has adapted enough to control his hunger.

You could take one of the infants with you - if the mother allows. You have an inkling that Arinna might like that.

And the little teeth on a nipple are quite aphrodisiac.

You smile and then rush back home with renewed vigor, dreams of a family with Will fueling your desire.

******

Jack comes by the next morning, asking for your opinion and you realize you need to visit Randall, and soon, if you want to set up the test for Will.

He is as you expected, still gullible, mendable, easily directable.

Always ruled by his fascination for teeth.

Your teeth at that.

You wonder if Will will make the connection to your fangs.

You give Randall address and date, promising to be there to supervise.

Well. Supervise, yes. Just in case. But you don’t think you need to be.

******

Randall Tier may be many things, but he is not a gifted liar.

Will keeps his distance for most of the discussion, watching, the fanged beasts around him drawing his attention. It's easy to see the fascination.

If Randall ever saw Hannibal's…

Will frowns, watching Randall ignore him almost completely.

He has been forewarned. Told what to say.

A player on the field.

Will's heart skips a beat but he refuses to give in to the smile that just wants to tug at his lips.

******

The heir of the Verger's meat industry, on his doorsteps.

And she drinks. Whiskey.

Will offers her two fingers of it, slightly weary of her intentions, glad when she takes the armchair offered, a good three feet away from his own. Her eyes glint in the low light, gaze intelligent and inquisitive. Haunted.

He takes a sip and refuses to see.

To look deeper.

Will deflects her inquiries regarding Hannibal's guilt, throwing the ball back, softly. He doesn't phrase it as a question. "What do you think."

“Damned if I know!” It’s an exclamation and a statement and one done with a light laugh, smokey and alluring. He wants to smile but he just shrugs, his own emotions way too muddied to be of any help.

She stares at him, and he knows she is truly looking at him now, looking him over, her eyes traveling to the rest of the room, to the pack, to the books on the shelf. There is some kind of idea behind those green eyes, some kind of decision. Will sighs and takes another mouthful of whiskey, letting any interest in that go, only interested in drowning himself in misery because of a once more closed connection again.

She is no target for his ‘charms’ anyways, her reputation preceding her.

And so he lets her look, lets her get up and walk around his house, the soft steps unobtrusive and welcome for once, keeping him lonely company.

******

Margot’s scent clings to him, a sheer whiff of Jasmine bringing to mind her steely fragility, carried on a spine that just won’t bend.

That spine is something she has in common with Will.

And that you can smell her on him now is definitely not a coincidence. What a cute play at getting a bit back at you, it makes you want to smile. And yet it feels good that Will should care, should make sure not to remove her … visit.

He confirms it between words, twisting it around to include Randall Tier and you don’t call him on it, secure in the knowledge that he knows you are aware.

He always seems to know *that*.

“I’m curious what would happen if your patients started comparing notes, Dr. Lecter. What would Randall Tier have to say to me?”

You would be hard pressed to believe that he and Jack didn’t visit Randall yet… you call his bluff, your tone a bit flat. “What did Randall Tier say to you? “

To your delight he doesn’t even try to deflect, catching on easily and jovially, walking around behind his chair.

He feels so much more relaxed in your space since he marked it. Made it his. You remind yourself to continue to listen closely. “He said he was much better now. That mental illness was treatable. Randall Tier is a success story.”

A success story. Yes, indeed. And one he knows is a success in quite another way. You would bet your life on it. “You believe he's innocent?”

He stops and faces you, the way he says it almost accusatory. “I believe your therapy was

successful. You can be persuasive.”

You hide your smile. “Persuasion is not coercion.”

His tone is deceptively light now. “How many have there been? Like Randall Tier? Like me?”

Ah. So this is what this visit is about. He thinks he might be just a fling, a thing that’s easily cast aside. While a part of you is angry all of the sudden, a larger part cannot blame him, not with everything he’s seen of you, and with you. There will be a time soon, when he will understand. “Every patient is unique.”

He turns away, taking a step, chin raised. Clearly dissatisfied by your answer. You didn’t expect the next comment though.

“Your psychiatrist came to visit me at the hospital before my trial.”

Really. Your tone reflects your astonishment. “Dr. Du Maurier.”

His tone is very soft now, letting the truth shine through, saying so many things without actually voicing anything. “She believed me. She knew there were others like me.”

No, not like him. And right now you are so angry at Bedelia you could rip her pretty little head clear off her shoulders. You didn’t think she actually had it in her. Though you knew already that she was in proverbial bed with Robertas of course. You look away, tone dry. “Fascinating.”

His tone is a curious mixture of lightness and darkness, a pitfall of hope and denial of such. “Did you kill her?”

Interesting to realize he would have liked that. What is Bedelia to him? “No.”
He nods to himself, slightly disappointed and you have the distinct feeling he is working up to the question, forcing himself to ask. “What do you think about when you think about killing?”

Everything.

Death, Divinity, Life, Blood, Eternity, Satisfaction, Ecstasy, Brilliance, Light, Darkness.

Delight.

You try to make it simple. “I think about God.”

He is taken aback a bit, probably trying to reconcile the answer with what he has glimpsed across your bond. “Good and evil?”

No, it really isn’t that simple. “Good and evil has nothing to do with God. I collect church collapses. Did you see the recent one in Sicily?” A negative aborted shake of his head and so you continue. ”The facade fell on sixty-five grandmothers during a special Mass. Was that evil? Was that God?” He swallows, his eyes riveted to yours.” If He's up there, He just loves it.” You let the statement sink in, enjoying speaking the words. “Typhoid and swans, it all comes from the same place.”

His expression is alight with an amusement he doesn’t dare to truly show, turning his face away to regain control of it, the question returning to his previous subject. “Does Randall Tier believe in God?”

You blink, trying to read between the lines. He is asking whether Randall Tier believes in punishment, in justice. *His* justice. Maybe it is time to give him a hint of what’s to come. You’re sure Robertas won’t mind a little nudge. “Perhaps you should have a more personal conversation with Mr. Tier and ask him what he believes.”

He hesitates, his tone almost inaudible when he finally speaks, almost like talking to himself. “Oftentimes people only speak the truth of what they know and believe if they are faced by death.”

You smile, your own tone very gentle, glad he picked up on what you didn’t say. “Indeed. And sometimes … “ You get up, stepping around his chair to reach out to him, your hand on his shoulder squeezing lightly. “Sometimes they need a little push.”

You do not dare to say more, lest you influence the test too much.

And then, you just know Robertas would create one of his own.

But you know he is aware enough when he reaches up and squeezes your hand just for a moment, his eyes locking with yours. There is a fire in them that belies his almost passive expression, a fire that wants to be set free.

You will do your very best to help him release it.

******

Randall cannot help himself, he has to snap at the little dog, injuring it, but luckily just lightly.

You know you would never hear the end of it if that little terrier died. As it is, you feel you might get into trouble for this already.

You send Randall off with a few well chosen words, watch him circle around the house. Will has killed the lights now, you can hear his heartbeat, slow thunder, all his senses primed.

Glass shatters and you twitch, wanting to be there, praying Will has kept the bond open.

You are not disappointed.

Rage and excitement explodes, burning a fiery path along the bond and your nerves, invigorating and *alive*.

You concentrate on the emotions and sensations, trying to fill out the details with what you can hear, can see from he shadows dancing.

You expected a shot but instead *fists rain down on you*, anger directed at YOU *hurting the person* between his thighs. *Pulling parts of the contraption off, throwing it to the side*. Another punch and *blood flows and you smile*, wondering if he can sense it. He is viciously aroused now, by blood and fury and adrenaline, entranced in the orgasmic haze of killing with bare hands.

Another punch and then his hands, *around your throat*, reaching, twisting.

The effort of keeping the man beneath you pinned by weight and force of mind.

Bones break and you gasp out loud, feeling the flood of endorphins with him, the sickly ecstasy, leaving only a craving for more.

More.

Yes.

Your vision tinges with red.

NOW.

Your hunger roars to life, unstoppable, clawing at the reins.

But…. You MUSTN'T.

Your teeth drop, there is *no way* to contain them and you rush off, feverishly looking for prey, something else than *him*.

So foolish to come here without the Bentley, but you thought it might have been too suspicious. The blood in the trunk would have been helpful though. You growl, snarling into the dark night, furious that you have to go for his own safety now, have to feed, else you might just kill him.

There. A dealer. He'll have to do.

You drop down and drag him off, your teeth ripping his throat open.

He is dead in three deep droughts.

You throw him off, furiously glowering at the dark, wanting more.

Needing more if you want to face Will anytime soon.

You hiss in annoyance and set the corpse on fire with your lighter, careful to slash the throat even more with your pocket knife. And then you rush off again, heading for the unsavory parts of Baltimore, your hunger still clawing at your innards.

It takes seven kills to sate it today.

When you are finally calm again you listen for his heartbeat, expecting it to be at Wolf Trap, but it isn't.

It is much closer.

Your heart skips a beat, elation spreading.

Arinna waits in the hallway, her gaze a penetrating stare, the shadow presences of Nya and Rebekka hovering just out of sight in the living room. She steps up to you, quietly, her sheer satin house suit flowing around her, the beige gold making her an ethereal golden goddess.

You wonder if he saw her, *them*, when he came in.

Arinna puts her hand on your chest, her voice low. "We helped him prepare. I…" she hesitates, looking over to the living room for a moment, "I made it clear to the others that he is no snack. Delicious as he might be."

You incline your head towards her, your interest piqued. "Why?"

She grins at you, quite salaciously. "Because you are a lovesick fool, Hannibal. And quite obviously so. But you are a fool who killed a coven leader just to protect him." Her tone turns grave. "And that is a fact that is well known now within the covens." She pauses, running her tongue over her teeth. "As you know Lucille was of my House." Another pause, a scrunching of her nose, her eyes sparkling. "You did me a favor…"

You clear your throat, eyeing the closed door to your dining room, feeling somewhat impatient but reluctant to be rude to your supposed … part-time spouses. "How so?"

She pulls back a bit, smiling gently up at you. "I will be the keeper of the Elder soon, since the previous keeper has been assigned Lucille's place in the council."

Ah. Old blood, nightly. An ecstasy of feeding awaiting. You raise your eyebrows, your voice carrying your sincerity. "I congratulate you. I am sure caring for Lilith is more to your… proclivities."

You speak the name without hesitation, the elder an ancient one indeed, and only spoken in hushed voices by fledglings. The one rejuvenating quite regularly and willfully, too, not stopping at coven members if need be. Only keepers had been safe, as history had proven. You inhale, realizing your vampiric offspring would get optimal care with them, a part of you just glad for this power.

Arinna sighs, twirling her hair. “Indeed. Our child will be a future leader.”

You incline your head, waiting, twitching inwardly, somewhat nervous to get this over with, to go to *him,* but also excited to get confirmation, to *see* the wonder. She reaches up and guides your head to her throat, pressing gently and you bite down, your teeth breaking the crust of her skin, the velvety nectar that is the blood of your own kind rushing down your throat, bringing images of the soul that is manifesting in her, already. Tiny still, the cells developing rapidly, already drawing of her strength. Her voice echoes through the blood: *He will be strong.*

You rear back, pride and delight rushing through you, licking your lips while she laughs at you, softly, her voice kind. “Yes. I will now go back to my… proclivities, as you have called it, Hannibal. In time, I will introduce you.”

Nya calls from the living room, tone playful. “One down, two to go, Hannibal… better hurry up with your little mortal.”

You clear your throat and straighten your back, refusing to shoot a dark look over at her, your voice a bit grumpy. “I will be with you soon enough.”

You smile at Arinna and then leave her there, wanting to finally see now, the smell of blood and death coming from your dining room a truly delicious aroma.

His blood as well. Though it is not flowing freely anymore.

A shame, really.

You push the doors open, softly, your bond sluggishly vibrating with contained excitement and restraint, a weird mixture of indecipherable emotions. You look up slowly, taking the battered corpse of Randall in, Will at the other end of the table looking deceptively small, deceptively soft. His eyes are lowered, hands hanging at his sides, there is no fight there, no challenge.

No backing down though, either.

You turn and close the door behind you, aware that it won’t hide anything from *them*, really, but wanting the illusion of privacy nonetheless. The illusion of being alone with him.

It's why he closed the doors in the first place after all, after they probably helped him arrange the body on the table.

He barely waits until you've turned again, tone flat. "I'd say this makes us even."

Amusement in your bond, not reflected in his tone. "I sent someone to kill you. You sent someone to kill me." A pause, his eyes still lowered. "Even Steven."

Such a flippant, *sassy* little thing to throw at you, perfectly non-emphasized, in such an important situation. Your hear literally swells with love and desire and need for him, fully aware that *he* is aware that he passed some kind of test, that *his kill* means more than your combined attempts at each others lives. Not that they were ever in true danger.

Still.

You want to reach for him, fall to your knees in front of him, *worship* him.

Lick his broken up knuckles, drench them in your own blood and saliva until they heal.

Rip the coat you gave him off him and eat his mouth.

Push him down and reward him for a job *very* well done, indeed.

Awareness and lust trickle through your bond, his breath a bit shorter, his smell intensifying.

Your own breath is hard to come by.

You feel torn, ripped apart by imposed duty and promised outcome.

Lya giggles in the living room.

And you sigh and turn towards the kitchen to get some warm water for his hands, aware that the smoldering need *thrumming* across your bond now has the property to fester, like cancer, if unfulfilled. And that bowing to the demands of Nela and therefore Rebekka and Lya and rejecting his need for now will frustrate him, a thin rope to balance on, indeed. And one he knows of, already feels repulsed by, to some degree.

Ultimately, it doesn’t matter, does it.

You will just have to find a way to juggle everything for a while longer.

It would not do if one of the balls would fall, not right now.

Eternity beckons after all, and *you cannot wait*.

-- forgive me --

Hey there!

I am sorry.

With lockdowns and home office and family, and everything else going on I have decided - after all - to discontinue this story. For now. I have several chapters mapped out but I… just can’t find any peace and quiet to write. My inspiration and drive have left me, despite my attempts to make more time (and space) for myself.

The situation being what it is I decided to be frank and honest - I don’t think I’ll be able to finish this. At least not now and not for a long while.

I thank all of you who managed to hang on, who kept asking, and I’d like to apologize to you especially.
I have tried, and none the least for you guys. But despite best intentions and attempts and everything it just doesn’t work out right now. :/

hugs

Maybe some day. I’ll keep the drafts…

Best, Nalyra

End Notes

Feedback and/or criticism are -always- appreciated!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!